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THE STORY OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS







Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas K. Gandhi

IN THE PATH  
OF  
*Mahatma Gandhi*

BY  
GEORGE CATLIN

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To  
HUMAYUN KABIR  
SCHOLAR, HUMANIST,  
PATRIOT

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## FOREWORD

THIS BOOK is a quest to find an answer to something which concerns all of us: By what rule should a man in these years best live his life? It is a piece of autobiography, a travel diary, a record of this quest in India.

It is the estimate by one traveller, in the dimensions alike of space and of ideas, one Argonaut, concerning how far Mahatma Gandhi gives an answer to the searcher. As such it necessarily becomes in part a life-review and biography of the Mahatma himself.

There are two kinds of philosophy: one inhuman, concerned with the synthesis of scientific knowledge into some logical whole; and the other a branch of the humanities, concerned with the relation of knowledge with living—as well as with that art of life in which the English have lost some of that singular gift which they had in and before the Elizabethan epoch. This book is only concerned with a philosophy of the second order.

A man knows a little about the universe and slightly more perhaps about himself. A man may be emboldened to think that what has been of great significance to him in his own life, may also be of human interest to others. When he philosophizes he should philosophize and botanize about his own direct experiences and re-write the Faustus epic in his own way. That is why the best of philosophies is that of Goethe. Thomas Mann has recently reminded us of this. It is perhaps only as part of the universal Faustus epic, the quest of man, that any autobiography is redeemed from egotism.

It is André Gide who writes, in his *Journals* under the date 1892, that the artist “rather than recounting his life as he has lived it, must live his life as he will recount it”. It is significant that the Mahatma’s own autobiography, to which I here owe so much, takes as its title what is also a universal motive: “*An Experiment with Truth*”.

The life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is to me the most significant life in the world to-day—only those of Albert

Schweitzer, the Alsatian musician, and Toyohito Kagawa, the apostle of Japan, approach it. Unlike the careers of Hitler and Stalin it has broken a new way. I offer this volume because perhaps others will feel as I do.

Someday I wish to make this philosophic autobiography complete. For the moment circumstances only permit me to present what I have seen and learned when on pilgrimage to the most remarkable seer of his age.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## **PART I**



## CHAPTER I

IN SEPTEMBER, 1933, a plane, after having lost its way over German Franconia, flew into Leipzig-Halle airport.

The well-known journalist, Henry Noel Brailsford, had fallen ill and I had been asked to replace him at the trial in the Leipzig Central Courts of Justice of van der Lubbe, Dimitrov and Torgler for setting fire to the Reichstag building. I arrived by that plane on a rainy autumn evening in the uninspiring, middle-class German town. The eminent foreign correspondents of the world, John Gunther, A. J. Cummings, Sauerwein, and others were gathered together, household names in their respective countries.

There in Leipzig I saw the Communist trio tried for their lives. To the credit of a German court be it said that, despite heavy Hitlerite pressure, only one was condemned to death. Before long George Dimitrov returned to Russia and then, as a key man and premier, to his native Bulgaria. I myself saw him on the plinth of Lenin's Tomb in 1935. But he did not escape from Germany before Hermann Göring had uttered in the court room the famous menace, "Wait till I get you outside this court." Hermann Göring himself was not to be so lucky as the Bolshevik Dimitrov. The road of violence would end, in this case, with sentence of death with ignominy.

In that year, 1933, the National Socialist Party of Germany, by a variety of means of intimidation and suppression, was installed in power. The mass of folk, who care little about politics, much about their stomachs, and follow the fashion, helped to put him in power. The majority of the German people, when it came to a ballot, did not actually put Hitler in power, but opposed him. But, if quite a number liked marching around in brown shirts, to the sound of martial music, the great mass had no objection to watching the show. Before long they were even prepared to think it patriotic to watch the show. The placards in the streets reminded them of the "Diktat" of Versailles, the disarmed condition of Germany,

the vast army of militarist Russia with its guns so much, much more numerous than the German guns.

Thirteen years later I was in at the kill. I sat in 1946 in the small court room in Nuremberg and saw Göring, Ribbentrop and the rest on trial for their lives. From my position in the gallery I could see them all. Göring, whom I had seen at such close quarters in the early days, was still florid, heavy, clad in his Air Marshal's uniform, now without decorations. He sat, however, turned half sideways so as to view his fellow prisoners, men whom he dominated even yet.

The French prosecutor continued his oration, his defence of liberty and of free elections, and his denunciation of those who had destroyed these things. By an unfortunate coincidence General Charles de Gaulle came out at this moment in the press with a statement that national power must always be the basis of the life of nations, thereby justifying, in just this measure, the old German thesis of *Macht* and voiding the claim of that international and natural law under which the criminals were being tried. The Russian judges sat impassive. They listened to the French prosecutor's denunciations which, if words meant anything, were also a stinging indictment of themselves. Six million Jews were on the conscience of Göring and two and a half million Kulaks on the conscience of Stalin. Those who had gazed at the little armed figures in coloured posters, representing the divisions of the immense Russian army on the borders of Germany, would gaze with dismay as those armed figures reappeared again—all over again.

The Nuremberg court, held there among the rubble of the city of the Meistersingers in which so many thousands of soldiers and civilians, men and women, had perished, was less merciful than its predecessor at Leipzig. The evidence was more damning. All save three were found guilty. Ribbentrop was hanged. Fifteen minutes they took in the hanging, before they announced he was dead. Large confident Hermann Göring committed suicide, and defrauded justice in the end, the justice of the victorious and united allies, the avengers of persecuted Jewry and the vindicators of the Kellogg Pact against aggression. The Lord had repaid, and the Karma of evil dealing had worked itself out—so far. There was much more to come as oppression produced its harvest in counter-

oppression, violence and hate in counter-violence and counter-hate.

The members of the court, the officers and staff, including the little Frenchman who, while matters were *sub judice*, gloated to show you lampshades of human skin, feasted well and wine-d well amid the ruins. *Vae victis*. I shared the food and the wine. Meanwhile the private talk was about the next war, between the united allies. And rightly. For the Karma of violence had not yet worked itself out in full.

I said to myself at this time: "Faustus will go on pilgrimage. Faustus has seen men and politics and women and manners for over forty years, and this from San Francisco to Simla, from Moscow to Madrid, in peace, in revolution, in war. Nowhere, or in but few places, have I found tranquillity. Everywhere I have found bloodshed and injustice under the sun, or carnal appetite and the ambition of men stimulated by the vanity of women. The people do not wish to awake, and therefore the people are slaughtered in their millions. Woe to the blind.

"Therefore I will go and visit the seer of India who for over seventy years has been dedicated, for over fifty years has preached, and with precept upon precept and by a life of example reiterated, the teaching of peace. Faustus will see whether this wise man has an answer. But first I will go and worship in the Pope's high way, and see the Pope of Rome. I will see, not only what the East, but what the West has to offer, after all this corruption of politics and power."



## CHAPTER II

IN SEPTEMBER, 1946, I took the Rome Express from Paris. I sweltered in the September heat and suffered under the fantastic prices charged in the Eternal City. I talked with Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, learning about their troubles. I received the courteous hospitality of the Grand Inquisitor, for such he was—the head of the Holy Office, Cardinal Caccia Dominione. But beyond this nothing moved or changed. Neither did the heat. The prospect seemed, if as vast, then as bare as St. Peter's dome itself.

Unchanged until one day I found the hotel porter and page boys in a flutter. Unchanged I had accepted that it would remain since the acting subordinates in the Secretariat of State had seemed, as officials will, to be so desperately busy. A messenger had arrived from the Vatican with a letter, bearing the familiar yellow embossed stamp with the tiara and crossed keys. After an infinity of difficulties I found myself in a car on the Appian Way, bound for Castel Gondolfo where Pope Pius was in residence, in retreat from the Roman sun.

The difficulties had meant delay and the delay meant a late arrival. We reached Castel Gondolfo high on its hill, famous for its amazing view over the blue Alban Lake and the encircling volcano crater. Golden and beautiful was Latium that morning, and the sun was on the houses of the modest village street as we drove to see the Pope. The courtyard of the small castle delayed us but for a minute—it took no longer to cross than the creaking elevator took time to climb. On the higher floor fine salons, dignified but not grandiose, opened out. Here paced three or four monsignori. One presumed that a long wait was in store, such as one had suffered with many a minor official, before one was ushered in to see the Successor of Peter and Vicar of Christ.

Here I was wrong. The Pope does not usually receive in Castel Gondolfo and the audience list was brief. Within ten minutes, expecting to be shown into the ante-room of some

Cardinal, a door opened and I found myself in a room, not extensive, where a figure in white rose from the chair behind a desk and motioned me to a seat at the same table.

Pius XII does not lend himself to photography. The facial bones are too prominent. The eyes look haggard behind the spectacles. The man, seen face to face, is different. What impresses is the informality of gesture, the total lack of pompous stiffness so common with lesser men, an almost Rooseveltian tact, the delicacy of hand and figure and the luminous, sympathetic eyes which dominate the whole face, the whole relation, the whole room. Such a kind of man is the Supreme Pontiff; and as one bent to kiss the sapphire ring, the double relation, the human and the princely, is still not forgotten.

Modern man likes little mummery. Even in the affairs of art and symbolism and good taste he prefers the simple, the austere, even the utilitarian. His first question is, "To what practical end?" His first response is "Why should we not be equal?" He believes only occasionally in the deep truth that manners, style of education, *dharma*, performance of the duties of the function make the man. But he rightly identifies simplicity with dignity.

As I leaned with elbows on the table, to discuss the affairs of India, the risk of Christians involving themselves in this fray to their own disadvantage and that of the Church of St. Thomas, the matter of the talk was important for human lives. And no throne interposed itself between myself and the attention of the Holy Father. For twenty minutes and more we talked before he dismissed me with his blessing and with three rosaries of his gift, one of which I proposed to take to India.

The politics of Catholic Christianity, the politics of the church militant in the world, must be judged as all politics are judged, in the light of the responsibilities of the times. My concern was with the politics of the world itself. The question was whether anywhere man had discovered a new technique, instead of the ambition to dominate the world by the sword which could only be met (if at all) by a world government ruling by the sword.

My last memory of the Successor of Peter was as I left the room with the sun pouring through the window from over the Alban lake and the hills of Latium, and the white figure of

the Pope standing with his arms extended, in a fashion peculiar to himself, in blessing.

In the little shrine by Quadre Fontane, where the chant echoes into the street outside, and in the cool spaces of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, it was possible to meditate for oneself upon what replies were possible to the problems posed in Leipzig and only half answered in Nuremberg. For the practice of men is certainly not the full righteousness of God.

### CHAPTER III

At two days' notice the journey was arranged, the cabled invitation from Bengal in my pocket. England, as far as Winchester, this bitter March of 1947, was still under snow. Then airborne—and the journey begun, to the East for the second time in the twelve months and to learn an answer to some questions.

After long stretches of desert, now blotted out in the rapidly deepening dusk of an Egyptian nightfall, a star of light spread below. Carthage and Cyrene, Hippo where Augustine wrote his *Confessions* and lived and died, left far behind. The great plane, bound for India, banks and turns ready for the run to come down. The sparkle of Grand Cairo becomes brighter, nearer, and in the middle a broad ribbon of blackness which marks the Nile. Woe betide any small craft on her surface. The flight levels out and, amid a swish of warm dark water, a spray of light-specked foam, the sea-plane alights. A small boat comes out, and the passengers pull over to the boat-house for the night's accommodation. A sufficiently gigantic Egyptian is available to provide coffee for those who do not wish to bundle into the next taxi and off to visit Shephard's Hotel before the bar closes at ten prompt under military orders. So to bed.

Up before crack of dawn and into the plane again. Sunrise over Sinai, sudden sunrise over the red, remorseless desert, and early breakfast as we cross the Holy Land—a necessary speed if we are to be in Bahrein by lunch. In the distance, at the north end of the Dead Sea one can just see the debouchment of the Jordan, so famous and as small as the Stratford Avon. On the furthest hills rest clouds caught in the light of the early morning sun. One wonders whether, over there, is Jerusalem or whether one can see as far as Hermon and the mountains of Gilboa. One wonders whether snow often falls on Hermon as in the days when David lamented over the dead Prince, Saul's son, "his brother Jonathan".

How slow was the Magic Carpet of the *Arabian Nights Entertainment*, which travelled from Baghdad to Cabul between dusk and dawn. It seems but an hour since we left the Nile and already the Euphrates, "that ancient river", is in sight. No wonder that this should be thought to be the Land of the Deluge. All beneath us, as far to the north and east as eye can see even at this height, is flood, a yellow-green flood the colour of pease, flowing around palm trees and over roads in this land of Noah's Deluge. The geometrical squares of the sun-baked mud-brick houses stand out, amid their date-palms, from the green flood waters of a world in flux.

The route of the air-borne passenger reveals history and confounds it. Within a few hours of leaving behind the sites of Memphis and of Babylon, and before the noon sun shines on the passenger who saw last night, faintly silhouetted against the Western sky, the immemorial figure of the Egyptian Sphinx—so soon the aircraft heads out into the Persian Gulf. Here over Arabia one sees scorched red sand and scorched red hills, and then, as one looks down, one sees patches, geometric rectangles on the burning mountain tops. One realizes that even here the human race clings on like lichen, ekes out a livelihood, digs balks and ditches to collect even the dew. How few here are the "inducements" for life, and yet life obstinately continues, men dig and women give birth. On the opposite side to Arabia one sees the long Iranian coastline, the unvaried Persian hills, without blade of grass or tree, shimmering in the heat and hostile to the mariner. Did one land here one would perish from heat within forty-eight hours. How brave a man was the Sailor Sindbad who adventured along these desolate coasts in the dawn of history, passing magic mountains where magnets drew even spars of iron from the passing boats and wrecked the unsuspecting mariner. Far inland Cyrus reigned and in Shiraz poets sang, and this way too marched Alexander, the hero, the young Iskander, on the road to India in those days when the world was also young.

Nevertheless the passenger is also exhilarated by the sense of his own adventure and that one is leaving behind Europe, bled white by war, which one has seen all too closely too long and leaving behind one's own homeland misfortunes. One is leaving northern Europe behind for the lands of the blazing sun.

Perhaps now one will find new illumination on how the old problems shall be answered. At least these ideas are an anodyne as one escapes from the turmoil of the world and the flesh, from the pressure of minor affairs and the manœuvres of party ambition. And they are more. To breathe the air of ideas is to breathe the atmosphere of a fresher world, possessed by the eternal freshness of truth; and to escape from a world where modesty and disinterestedness are cardinal vices—from a world where Hitler said that History always pardons success, and came so near to proving it. And Faustus is in quest of tranquillity, the inner and sapphire tranquillity.

Lunch is in a shanty in Bahrein underneath the midday sun of the Persian Gulf. One looks out on the Gulf with its small islands like poached eggs or the oysters of its own pearl fisheries. In the distance, beyond the causeway, are the domes of the palace of the local oil king, the Sheik of Bahrein. Beyond is sea, teeming with little fish. And beyond the sea is desert. Such an immense part of the world desert; civilization so small.

By late afternoon we are in Karachi. A two storied cement walled hostelry welcomes us to the land of the lous. A press delegation has to be dealt with. But there is scarlet hibiscus in the bushes. Outside my window two Indian families, in a mud courtyard, slap their laundry on stones to cleanse it. Goats wander around with the children and other livestock, as they might do in Ireland save that the children, in this burning climate, are almost nude. Three Indian kites, with their hawk pinions, poise in the air above and swoop for their prey. Karachi has much of the air of a western city, perhaps a flourishing Italian sea-port of the more utilitarian kind. But alligators live in the water tanks. And sometimes the inhabitants feed them with dogs for sport. It is thought very funny. However at least the inhabitants do not lynch each other, as yet. They will.

Karachi, however, is for me no abiding place. I have a gigantic tour ahead which will carry me as far as Peking and to view the golden tiled roofs of the Forbidden City of the Mings and Manchus. I must leave the banks of the Indus which, further north, great Alexander trod. Of this adventure he has left at Taxila his memorial, that all may still see where the Macedonian phalanx passed. I have to see the Ganges and

the sacred city of Hinduism, the city of Benares, and the temples that rise beyond the inlets of Cochin and back of the cliffs of Cape Cormorin. I have to hear mass according to the rite of St. James, the cousin of the Lord, and to sit where the Buddha sat in yellow Sarnath. I have to dine with Mohammed Ali Jinnah in the palace of New Delhi, to congratulate Pandit Nehru on the birth of the new Asia, and to see the Mahatma in his palm and wattle ashram, the little naked man with his white robe whose answers I seek.

## CHAPTER IV

THE AEROPLANE banks and circles as it comes down over the high domes and Indian tombs of Delhi, the city of the Moghuls and for that matter of Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect of its contemporary grandeur. I continue the flight to Allahabad and then take train from the crowded small station.

A variegated humanity walks or camps on the platform. Some wear their shirts inside their trousers and some outside. Some wear national dress—or rather Congress dress, for there is no national dress—with the white muslin folds drawn between the legs and hitched up. Some wear the formal dress with a black silk frock coat buttoned tight over long white trousers which fit the calves close. Some wear nothing but a loin cloth and do not comb their beards. More uniformly the women wear their bright coloured *saris*.

The darkness falls as the train, having left behind the suburbs of Allahabad, slowly, so slowly chugs out across the sparse fields and dotted woodlands to the north of the Ganges. The great river itself, and the Jumna lost in flats of sand, I have only seen as yet from the aeroplane. As night comes on large fires of leaves, set burning for the sake of an ash fertilizer for the fields, are ablaze. At short intervals the train stops. Railway officials hasten to and fro with hurricane lamps. Great numbers of village folk quit the over-crowded train and leave by field paths for their mud-hut villages, singing in high-pitched voices. Yet no one would describe India as a land of song. The sadness of life rather than the joy of life is the theme.

After a seemingly interminable time, a time at last too dark and, earlier, too dusty for reading, the train reaches my destination. Benares. I can see no taxi but I consign my baggage to a horse-drawn buggy, and we jog through lanes, apparently in the countryside, seeking an hotel, as I later learn, in the old European cantonment quarter. At last we turn into a driveway and a turbaned hotel porter assures me that a room is ready for me.



Easter morning. More Sunday-like than Sunday in urban England, in Tooting Bec or perhaps Virginia Water. I am breakfasting on bacon, eggs and coffee. The walls of the hotel breakfast-room are covered with aquatints, hunting scenes, the "Cries of London" framed with wide, black shiny margins. I note the haughty and stimulating notice on the menu, "Corkage for Champagne and Sparkling Wines, five Rupees". English India. Beyond this breakfast room is a drawing-room with a few Indian tables and large chintz-covered sofas, patronized by the Australian manageress. Across the verandah one has a view of a garden with flowering plants, some pampas grass, and then, through a gap, one sees near at hand the stone steeple of an English country church, its bells ringing for church service.

Only the Indian waiters, who lie on the drawing-room floor to avoid the heat of 106° in the shade when they are not waiting on table, disturb the illusion of the English scene. Closer inspection will multiply discrepancies. In this sahib hotel the water closet seats indeed are there; but they are stowed under tables because the water has never been connected. The night-soil is removed by hand labour. There is no telephone to break the nineteenth century peace.

The flowers are unfamiliar. Bright bougainvillaea decorates the front of my bedroom verandah. And in the garden by the steps a bearded and turbaned Indian snake-charmer is at work. He has his little earthen pots. With deft hands he unties the perilously makeshift string which holds down the cloth tops of the jars which might hold honey or preserve. A brown head emerges, small, poised, hooded. The cobra in quivering tension, like a steel whip, is waiting for the next stage of the performance. Another honey pot, larger this one, is unpacked and out come tumbling two baby pythons, each about a foot and a half long. They seem to move over the ground, even so, at a quite alarming speed. I tell the charmer that I have no small change, as indeed I have not, and he goes in search of more profitable custom.

"Clark's Hotel"! Who was Clark? Not even the manageress knows. Nor her son who is slow in speech. Most of his information is wrong anyhow. But here in the last century, perhaps soon after the Mutiny, some wandering Englishman established his hotel, Indian in some of its austerities, but

furnished to suit the taste and please the eye of exiled Britons and their mem-sahibs. Hence the hunting scenes, untouched by any influence of India or Benares, and the comfortable chairs in which a man might drink his whiskey. One show case of Benares textiles alone warns us where we are. Indeed are we in Benares? We are in the "Benares Cant."—"Benares British Cantonment for Troops and Civilians"—which is a very different affair, an England out of England, vigorously "being English" despite the sun and the dust.

My Easter duties done and the sermon finished, a sermon preached by an Indian priest of no small eloquence, I decide to visit the makers of fine textiles since they are world famous. My guide is a quite eminent Indian professor of archaeology of the Benares University. Arrived in the middle of the town on the crowded main street with its two storey houses and box-like shops without shop windows, where the shop-keeper sits cross-legged amid his wares, I disconcert my good guide by expressing the hope that we may get a cool drink.

This request is not so simple as I had supposed. India is no land of cafés and restaurants, still less of taverns. The Cheltenham-like atmosphere of Simla, with its eleven o'clock fashion parade and its local ladies sitting sipping coffee, is quite exceptional. No one expects to see ladies playing croquet or the sound of the genteel mallet in Benares, which is as Indian as any city in India. Our first attempt in a dark hole of a place with rough tables being unsuccessful, for only food was served there, we tried again, and were this time lucky. Although some of the customers courteously offered to make way, it was simpler to stand on the pavement while the proprietor, cross-legged on his counter, seized a brownish lump of ice and wrapped it in some browner sacking. He then hammered it with a pestle until he had reduced it to small fragments. These he put into a glass, rather of the Army than the Woolworth pattern, and poured on the whole a bright yellow fluid such as one associates, not with Eastern sherbet, but with the Western entertainment booths of Blackpool and Atlantic City. I could not see the label but I would suspect, if the drink was not of Western manufacture, at least that this was one of those cases where the East has been all too ready to copy the cheaper manufactures and more poisonous concoctions of the West.

If one looked to other shops one had the same impression—not only Bata Shoe shops in every quarter, but all the jim-crack of the West for sale.

In a side-street leading to the Temple of Vishvanath, we entered into a different world. We climbed the stairs to the upper floor of a small shop. Proudly we were shewn the autograph book of former customers, including "Edward P.", Edward of Windsor, Prince of Wales. I suggested to the merchant that, unless he were careful, so valuable a collection of autographs would be stolen. As bale after bale of precious silks and brocades were brought out, we were invited to sit down. Perhaps a glass of some cool drink? Lime or some sherbet? There was no pressure to buy—and the statement was not mere words—but here were materials, cloth of gold, deep crimson brocades, ready for export and exhibition in London and Paris and New York.

It was the Emperor Babar, the second of the great Moghul Emperors, ruler of India from Delhi, who said of the people whom he had conquered: "They have no good looks; of social intercourse, paying and receiving visits, there is none; of genius and capacity, none; in handicraft and work there is no form or symmetry, method or quality."

But the Emperor was less than just to his subjects. Whatever may have been the looks in those days of the countrymen of such handsome figures as Nehru or the Maharaja of Patiala, it is improbable that the standard of craftsmanship is greatly different. It is unnecessary, in order to prove the point, to look back at the sculpture of the Gupta Empire or the Ajunta caves. Let us take this piece of stuff. It is deep red with a pattern in gold, but reversible, deep red on a field of gold. It is hand woven and has taken weeks to weave, weeks even for the one piece. Moslems are the craftsmen who turn out this work in Hindu Benares, and the craft secret is a family secret. If the family dies out, then the secret of that particular pattern disappears. Here is real craftsmanship, not shoddy work; and the product is a glory to the eye. The secrets of craftsmanship are in this country not items of trade but heirlooms. Indeed the basis of the whole structure of this society is the family and not the state. Hence the products of India, if unstandardized, are also as uneven as the families are different. Too often, with the

textiles, when the dye is good the material is poor, and no improvement upon the machine products of the Bombay factories. But in Benares all factors have conspired to enable its courteous merchants to sell a thing of beauty.

Only one question was left in my mind as I handled this material for curtains and bedcovers, which I should not see again even in the Viceroy's palace. Who should be the buyer to-day? The favourite wives of maharajas, the mistresses of millionaires? Not the manual workers, not the creative workers. Had we here, as so often in India, a great irrelevancy; or is a beautiful thing, whether of ivory or cloth of gold never an irrelevancy but itself justifies the civilization which can use it? Had we here the jewels and toys of the selfish culture of the few which Tolstoy told us to despise; or things of beauty produced by humanity's skill of which the wealthy patrons were pathfinders for the pleasure of all mankind? Gandhi, with Tolstoy and Savonarola, would, I said to myself, have burned these vanities. Gandhi, Nehru had said, would regard even the Taj Mahal as only a vast monument of forced labour, so entirely was he the moralist. But, in the perspective of the dignified life, the Goethean life, the full, rich, varied life of the civilization of which human beings are capable, would Gandhi be right?

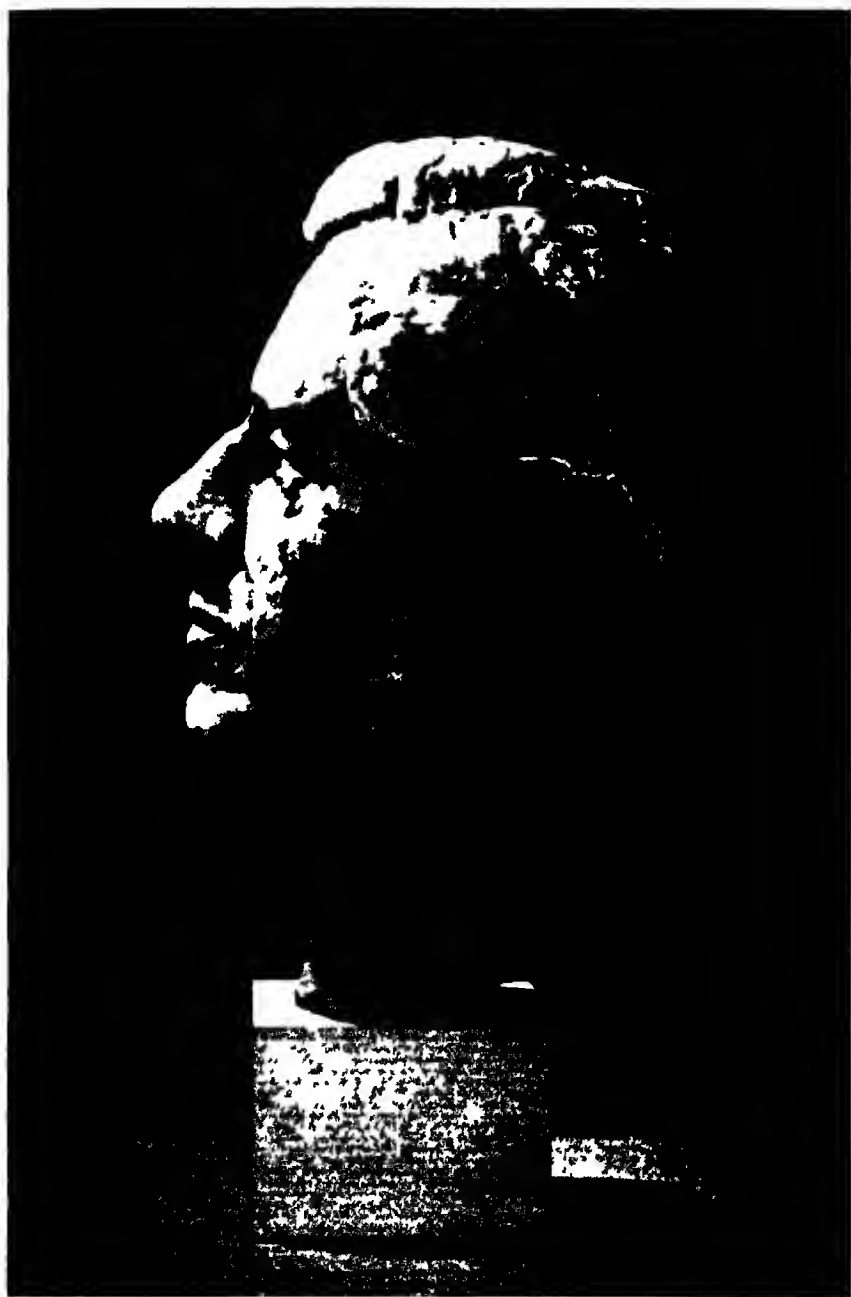
Always through the ages there have been workmen prepared to pander to the comforts of the over-rich, prepared to tie men by silken bonds of pleasure and memory and love of possession to the rule of men by things. I should myself have felt unhappy privately to possess in quantity the results of this skill which, found in some church or temple or public place, would have given me a limitless delight. Nevertheless what astounded me (and here the Emperor Babar may have had some right on his side) was, with all these temptations at hand, the bareness and lack of aesthetic appetite for colour and high skill which characterized so many Indian homes, even of quite wealthy men. Even with maharajas there was the tendency to convert a palace or a mansion into a museum jungle of ill-assembled objects. There were errors of which I can conceive of none of the Chinese being guilty, with their impeccable sense for joining simplicity with good taste. Nevertheless, my eyes returned to the silk wares of Benares, in the shops of the merchants there, to be reassured that there was also an exquisite Indian taste.

## CHAPTER V

To come to Benares means, if not to bathe in the Ganges, at least to see the Ganges and to see, from it, the holy city itself. And the best time to do this is after dark, if there is a full moon. This I was told by my guides of the Hindu University, itself, if not the centre of greatest learning in all Hindustan, at least the centre of greatest learning in Hinduism.

My friend Om Prakash Ghosh and I have hired a boat and a boatman and pushed off, after dark, into the Ganges flood. Ghosh is an ardent Congressman, who has devoted his life to the Congress cause. As we lunched together, earlier in the day, he told me that punctually each day he did a little spinning on the small machine which he carries around with him—a machine the size of a portable typewriter, so unlike the old European spinning wheel. He has presented me with two spools of his own spinning, rough but the fruit of conscientious work done under the rule that every Congressman should have some share in manual labour—"Bread Labour"—like the Benedictine monks of old. He has spent time in prison, as a "political", and time in the Mahatma's *ashram* or community. He has an earnest impassioned mind, but I agree with enough of his ideas for us to get along well together. And once we have established this contact I find here a most generous heart.

The boat with the three of us in it glides under a moonlit sky easily down the Mother River of India, whose sacred waters bless in life and receive at death the bodies of the pious sons of Hinduism. There is a smell of warmish water, of warm mud and water. The holy Ganges is, indeed, here not so broad. A little lower it is crossed by a pontoon bridge. It has here none of the magnitude of the Yangtse or of its own mighty stream where, jointly with Brahmaputra, it flows out by the main channel into the Bay of Bengal. But night removes the clarity of lines. The deceptive moonlight carries to a remote distance the opposite shore and the palace of Benares' local raja. We have no need to look for this southern shore. The



George Catlin: head by Peter Lambda



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India.]*

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

high north bank is glutted with the palaces of princes, among which glistens, whitest and highest under the night vault, the palace of the princes of Nepal. The Dalai Lama's Potala palace at Lhasa itself cannot loom more impressively.

Gwalior has his palace nearby, red stone, with vast portals opening by a river gate and landing stage or *ghat* onto the stream, sinister as an Italian palace of some excommunicate Renaissance prince. It is, however, no desire to levy any piratical toll on the river-traveller but Hindu piety itself which has led their Highnesses of Gwalior and Indore to place these palaces here. It must have been on the Gwalior *ghat* that the enthusiastic French writer, Pierre Loti, saw the fair Indian maiden, and reflected that the first lesson of his Brahmin teacher was the unity of all, that he and she and all beautiful things were one. Alas! all ugly things and terrible things and the blood-stained nature-goddess Kali are real and one also. To Kali still the blood and heads of goats are offered as deodand. Hinduism, in one of its multitudinous aspects, but this the one not least close to the core of the Vedanta, moves massively, like the corpse-bearing sacred Ganges, beyond both good and evil.

The Brahm of Hinduism is not the Ormuzd of Zoroaster and the Parsecs, fighting a battle of the aeons for light against Ahriman and the forces of darkness and the Miltonic Satan. . . . Brahm is not the Jehovah of Moses, laying down Commandments or indicting Israel for her sins. Brahm is Ormuzd and Brahm is also Satan; He is Siva the Destroyer and Vishnu the Preserver; He is all, in all, transcending all; He is Me and also You, so far as you and I are more than just illusion; He also is the reality of the illusion and the change.

Or can we indeed speak in Hinduism of a cosmic Satan (or of Ormuzd the Good. . .)? Pain and sacrifice there will be and bloodshedding. But the cosmos was not created for the benefit of man or of any *one*; and its law is not shaped by any "all-too-human good". It *is*. Brahm is not the Suffering Good which is also the Divine Reason, the Logos Incarnate of St. John the Disciple. In the beginning was the Word, the Creative Word; but Brahm is also the Wordless, the unutterable, the uncreated. Brahm is Om and the changeless Self behind the matter of action. Brahm is the First Person, the omnipotent, the



omnipresent; but Brahm, as impersonal Essence, is also the whole Trinity, sustaining Brahmā, the Creator of Existence, Vishnu, Siva and all the gods.

God, I said to myself, is Brahm. God is that which, and He Who, *is*; but God is Reality under the aspect of Value. But Brahm is also the valueless . . . And, as Kali, Brahm is the terrible, the horrible. There have indeed been Russians, Rasputin-followers, who have come near to saying the same thing, denying in the name of the monism of the All-Creating the great dualism between good and evil, and the priority of the valuable, the rational, the Logos.

Hinduism is so tolerant . . . But when is the tolerance that of charity? And when is it tolerance above good and evil? Is it acceptance, going beyond the tolerance even of the Buddha? If the evil and transient also are real, and in so far as they are real, and the real is Brahm, whence arises need for salvation or action for good or abstinence from action for evil? What can be more amoral? . . . So I thought as the black warm flood of the Ganges moved impassively, without ripple, on to the thoughtless cruelty of the Indian shark-infested sea.

Indeed, I say to myself, there is an awe in the holiness of God. And the mystic knows his omnipresence, behind the wine, behind the bread. "Raise up the stone, and there thou shalt find Me: cleave the tree and I am there." But the awe is of the holy, not of the panic terror, not of Pan and Kali, against which we fight. The artists have, not without reason, given to the devil the appearance of Pan, the goat-god, the nature-god. And behind the veils of the phenomenal is the real, not as mindless energy alone, but as rational good-creating. Christian mysticism, like Judaic and Islamic, asserts the power of the specifically good; that the "pure act", the primal energy, the Real, has value—that the Almighty is the All-good. This is the faith.

To this Real all evil is privation and what Goethe called the *Verneinender Geist*, "the denying spirit", that which seems to be so wholly "real" that men call regard for it "realism", but which is yet *not* wholly real but only the back-current. Evil is the anti-polar current, the "becoming-less", the strain, the break-up, the decay, the "seeming" or Maya (which is yet

actual enough to us who also are transient), subservient to God who is and creates and energizes what is Becoming.

The Hindu pantheon is one of the world as flux and of Brahm as beyond value. The Egyptian and the Greek have esteemed the eternal as the valuable, the valuable as the eternal Being—but under this species of Value. Thus so early it is written in Deuteronomy xxxiii: "And underneath are the everlasting arms." And yet a Jesuit has written that the theology of Christendom could almost as well have been constructed upon the metaphysics of the Vedanta and India as upon those of Hellas . . . Almost: but not perhaps quite . . .

However, both hold their truths. To the Hindu Siva is an aspect of Brahm. To the West the All-Creating created the devil which resists Him from pride. But even the Hindu says that he who, as a man, worships the monkey or the tiger nature too much in his acts will be re-born, as punishment, as a monkey or a tiger. This hell is the predestined fruit of the *Karma* of the sinner. There is, then, punishment and there is, then, evil . . . The core of all is not the Self that Is, but the Self that is Love, "the Love that moves the sun and the other stars"—*l'Amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle*. Such is the Spirit—more than only Becoming and Unbecoming, Vishnu and Siva. To Mahatma Gandhi also, Om Prakash Gosh tells me, God is love. (And what just, I ask, may that mean?)

We move almost noiselessly down the river, since the stream is with us. Palace, with vast overhanging cornices and roofs, succeeds to palace, some white in the moon-light, some sombre red, the angry red of Indian stone. Temple follows temple, some red domed, some gilded or solid gold, with the quadrangular incurved dome of Hindu architecture which resembles some archbishop's mitre, not rounded like a Mussulman's turban. These domes, on closer inspection, can be seen to teem with sculptures of men and bulls and monkeys. Here, small but gleaming, only to be seen effectively from the river and, best in this light, is the Golden Temple of Benares. My guide tells me the cubic content of the gold on its roof. On the shore one can just descry the figures of late bathers, men and women who will have caste marks on their foreheads like our boatman. The women will usually have the red circular mark of Siva, god of destruction and remaking from change.

Some men will have the triple prong mark of Vishnu, the Preserver.

Against a glow, the glow of a fierce fire, one sees these human figures more clearly. Even a dog's form can be seen. One fire. I count up to four and I see the human beings running to and fro with wood logs or standing motionless. The fires are funeral pyres. They are burning the bodies of the dead here by night. This is the Burning Ghat of Benares.

We go on into the night until the furthest reaches of the sacred city have been attained. Then we turn. The boatman paddles against the stream and my companion talks of Mahatma Gandhi, and of life and death. Again we draw near to the Burning Ghat. Every night body follows body into the flames, before the ashes and unconsumed bones are cast into the sacred stream which brings parched India fertility. I count now nine fires, although some of the older ones, which I saw on the down-stream journey, have died to a ghoulish glow. I can even see the biers, the huddled heaps, on the top of the blazing wood. One by one the human dead follow, fire succeeding fire as the blaze which fades here rises there. The comparison with Dante's *Inferno* is made spontaneously by my companion, but this blazing hell is not for the wicked but for the good who, brought here for greater assurance by piety, are purged by fire and water and return to the fertile soil which gave birth to India's life.

I find myself wondering whether the poor also can get added assurance of happy rebirth by being brought, at death, to Benares. The answer is perhaps that the poor do get this assurance, those of them who first walk to Benares on their own two feet, and join the large and clamorous throng of beggars who in day time haunt its streets and at night time, sprawled on the stones, cumber its pavements along with the inevitable cows.

## CHAPTER VI

As THE boatman slowly paddles up-stream and my companion pursues the current of his own thoughts, my mind turns to these beggars and cows. It is difficult indeed for any Western mind to understand the mental outlook of cow-worship or, to use a less challenging phrase, "the protection of the cow". Not the fervour of the animal-lover newspaper readers or the crusading devotion of the anti-vivisectionist will quite prepare him. He will fail to understand why, for example, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi should be so wrought up about this matter of the protection of the cow, or why one of the things about which Hindus find it difficult to forgive Moslems is their lack of interest in the protection of the cow and indeed their tendency to slaughter the cow and eat beef. Gandhi describes his juvenile lapse, under the incitement of young reprobates, into beef-eating with as much horror as if he were describing clandestine cannibalism. The Indian cow or the water-buffalo, although the latter may be sleek in China, is not so attractive a beast, scrawny as it is and even emaciated, that it is easy to see why she should arouse enthusiasm. Nor does the Indians' treatment of their bullocks, guided by ropes strung through their nostrils as they pull the monstrously heavy and unwieldy Indian carts, monuments of technical stupidity, seem so benevolent an attitude to Western eyes.

Yet Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi can sit down and deliberately write: "Mother Cow is in many ways better than the mother who gave us birth. Our mother gives us milk for a couple of years and then expects us to serve her when we grow up. Mother cow expects from us nothing but grass and grain."

The cow is a symbol, a sacred totem. It is indeed the symbol of the oneness, not only of all human life but the oneness of all that lives. It is the symbol of the meek that cannot protest or "protect their rights". (However, it is "the disciplined" not "the meek" which, in the right translation, the New Testament says shall inherit the earth.) "Cows, women, and

other Christians," wrote the pre-fascist philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, in one great sneer, lumping all together. But, for anyone who has travelled over the vast scorched land of India, where vegetation wilts, where only the cow or the goat live on, licking up the little moisture, it will be clear that the Aryan and even the earlier Indian peoples entered India on the back of the cow, lived by the udders of the cow, and would have died out had it not been for the cow.

Is it, then, any wonder that the Indian cow should be a national object of veneration, as the very symbol of India, as the actual beast without which India as a people would not have been? And this attitude is now ingrained, although it is a veneration that obstructs—Mr. Gandhi says that it need not—the development of good, well-selected herds, and it is the symbol of a past saviour which stands in the way of present well-being. But, as ever when discussing symbols, this mere rationalism will be of small avail in changing principles and prejudices. To treat the cow as merely "a thing" is to insult a Hindu as surely as to compel an orthodox Jew to eat pork.

For the Hindu the cow is the national symbol of India, but she is far more—for after all the lion is the national symbol of England but does not roam the streets. She is the religious guarantee, so long as her worship lasts, of the identity of all men, of man and animal, of all that is, in terms of one common being. She is the assurance that if she and man, then all the human castes themselves, are of one being and, however multiple the functions to which they are fated, of one brotherhood and sisterhood, part of one great universe of which each part has its duty and function. Below the outcaste is the cow, no "thing" but sacred. Moreover, the cow—is she not overflowing with milk and fertile? And she is thus yet another symbol of fertility. Is the silence of Christianity about the animal creation not a defect of Christianity? Is the forgetfulness of the West about the unity of living things not a defect of the West? Albert Schweitzer, apostle of "respect for life", would say "yes".

My boat draws in to the water's edge. It is scarcely possible to descry the opposite shore across the great Ganges flood despite the light of the full moon. The stones of the landing stage, running up in uneven steps assume monstrous forms

in this light. Earlier I had noticed that vast galleries lining some of the ghats seemed to slant almost to the water level. I wondered whether my eye had deceived me. A half-sunk temple tower confirmed my impression, as did my companion when I asked for an explanation.

The heavy stones, the temples themselves built on soft mud, were sliding into the river, like black elephants half submerged in the waters. And in India, however grandiose the new, the ruins of the old are permitted to remain in decay beside it. The Indian eye is not offended. Nor until recently were these ancient monuments, even where of interest, cared for. India is too much lost in dreams, when she has time to spare from the bare task of surviving, to concern herself with temporal history. In another millennium the difference between one century and another will be unimportant. It would almost be in ill taste to arrest the collapse of the heavy buildings into the sacred waters, the merging of all together in mud and in the unconscious sacred stream which is India's protest against the Western cult of noon-day and heightened consciousness, with its sharp, lucid intellectual shapes and clear-cut Grecian forms.

In the most sacred book of India, the *Bhagavad-gita*, "The Lord's Song," it is written:

"These bodies of the embodied One, who is eternal, indestructible and immeasurable, are known as the finite. Therefore fight, O Bhārata.

"He who regardeth this as a slayer, and he who thinketh that he is slain, both of them are ignorant. He slayeth not, nor is He slain.

"He attaineth Peace, into whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water, but remaineth unmoved—not he who desireth desires.

"Whoso forsaketh all desires and goeth forward far from yearnings, selfless and without egotism—he goeth to Peace.

"The harmonised man, having abandoned the fruit of action, attaineth to the eternal Peace; the non-harmonised, impelled by desire, attached to fruit, are bound.

"I, O Gadakesha, am the Self, seated in the heart of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

"And all-devouring Death am I, and the origin of all to come.

"I am the gambling of the cheat, and the splendour of all splendid things I; I am victory, I am determination, and the truth of the truthful I.

"He who neither loveth nor hateth, nor grieveth, nor desireth, renouncing good and evil, full of devotion, he is dear to Me.

"Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy thoughts resting in the Supreme Self, from hope and egoism freed, and of mental force cured, engage in battle."

"I am Thou. Thou art That. This is the wisdom."

If, then, I am of you, of one substance or being, why should I hurt or injure you who are myself? If I am in essence at one with all that is, then cow and bird and other beasts are at one, and I should not injure them. Except, that is, so far as I would injure or discipline myself. But if all is at one, then he who injures and he who is injured are at one, he who enjoys giving maltreatment and he who is maltreated; and how may we call this good or this bad in this primal unity? Under the species of reality we see the dagger of the assassin halt suspended and the victim pause in his cry, each like figures on a frieze or the pattern of a Grecian urn without genuine past or genuine future, but one in the bond of the present unity, unable to complain against each other.

This is an issue to which we shall return again, as we discuss the great structure and philosophy of Hinduism. How distinguish between one drop and another drop in the flowing Ganges? How really to find a difference between the good and the bad in the immense unity of nature? Or is there only "difference", not praise or blame; punishment but no crime; the web of consequence but no responsibility?

I get out of the boat amid the sleeping beggars. My companion is telling me that, according to the Mahatma, to Gandhiji, the true freedom is to be found within. So also the Buddha said: "Friend, I proclaim that in this my fathom-high ascetic's body, affected with sensations, there dwells the world and the beginning of the world and the extinction of the world and the way that leads to the extinction of the world."

Over to the left of the landing stage is a large modern statue of the elephant-headed Ganesh. There is an incessant clangour of gongs, a stimulant of mere noise, a spiritual gin-palace. To-morrow I promise myself I shall come down and look more closely at these temples. No one has used stranger phrases about them than the Mahatma. Perhaps my eye will be more kindly. Anyhow there is many a church deserves no better name.

Now my task is to find my way by car, with a driver who hoots with his horn incessantly, feverishly, chronically, back through the emptying streets to my period-piece hotel, where I shall sleep in a room with a cement-floored bathroom attached, under a revolving fan and with the kind of furniture which was used in a housemaid's bedroom in a middle-class English home in the 1890's. In the lounge the sahibs' hunting scenes still keep watch over the ghosts of seven decades of departed, fair-moustachioed, whiskey-drinking sahibs and over the sleeping Indian coolies.



## CHAPTER VII

IN THE brilliant burning light of an Indian noon in the month of April, we skirt the courtyard of the mosque at Benares. It rises in characteristic shape, with its dome and minarets, in the heart of the sacred city of Hinduism. An ancient tree stands in the elevated courtyard, near the small enclosure where in most mosques there is a pool. In the stern puritanism of design of their mosques, the cool void of the interior, only distinguished by the pulpit of the imam and by the swinging pendulum of a clock which gives the effect of some Dutch picture, in the preference for a wide courtyard with a tree supplying a patch of shade and a pool giving quiet peace, the followers of the Prophet the world over seem to seek to reproduce, wherever they go, the conditions desirable in the desert from which Islam came. If in the Benares mosque the pool is lacking which tells of the desert traveller, there is still the tree which offers under the sun alike of Arabia and of India its blessed shade. It is a man's shadow which, in the imagery of the Moslem world, gives blessing.

The Benares Mosque was built by the Moghul Emperor Aurungzeb. Several times the Moslems had destroyed the Hindu temple. Several times the rulers had connived at its being rebuilt. In the foundations of the mosque platform can be seen the walls of the old Hindu temple. At last decisive destruction overtook it and, to make the matter final, Aurungzeb erected this new mosque for the faithful in its place. As my Hindu guide said, the Hindus had destroyed few mosques, the Hindu genius was to absorb and to influence. The Moslems had destroyed scores of temples when they surged into India in the Middle Ages. However, Moslem intolerance had, even this time, not entirely succeeded for, taking a turn through a narrow passage between buildings leading towards the Ganges, there we found born once again the temple itself, like a new shoot from an old vital vine stock.

The temple service was over but we were bidden to return in half an hour. This we did. Beggars asked for alms or, more subtly, sought alms in barter for the presentation of a flower. From the balcony of a house across the four-foot passage we could inspect the gilt domes of the low-built temple, each with its metal flag or vane. Below we pushed our way past men and beasts and baggage in the narrow alley to the temple gate where one could watch worshippers prostrate themselves but not see the shrine or the god itself. The court was crowded.

The worship in the temple, my learned guide warned me, was one of the many compromises of Hinduism, a compromise between the Aryan gods, Brahmā, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Preserver, and Siva, the Destroyer, and the more primitive but not less potent Dravidian gods. This was a temple of Vishvanath—Siva as Vishvanath. The enquiring Hindu mind, seeking a synthesis between Aryan and Dravidian, had asked what was the fundamental principle, the things inspiring awe, beneath and behind all the various forms of the gods, the “something” which Dravidian aborigine and northern Aryan alike could agree to worship. That something was the Primal Energy. But the symbol for the popular worship—this it had been left for the primitive mind to determine, and the Dravidian mind had determined it in the same fashion as hundreds of other primitives. The Hindu, the Brahmin, had never quite decided on his attitude to this very popular worship. He had only agreed to tolerate. The Moslem would not tolerate the outrage to Allah. But, in this country of tolerance, the Moslem had lost.

Anxious to see the image of Vishvanath I was moved by my guide, who had talked with the priests, around the wall to a kind of lepers’ squint, through which, although an outcaste, I could see into the shrine three feet away. I jostled with the throng. Inside the precinct an old woman was crouched by the gates of the shrine, thrusting others on one side in her devotions in no uncertain fashion. The *darshan* or display of the god would take place at any moment. The heavy gilt metal doors would be drawn back. Through the thick sandstone wall, pierced by the squint, I should be able to see. The temple worship had begun again at noon with the sounding

of gongs and what I can only describe as the clanging of metal. Unmusical, barbaric as any negro ritual, presumably it aroused by its noisy frenzy the emotions of the worshippers.

The old lady had been prevailed upon to yield place by a few inches. Past heads, arms, limbs, crouching bodies, it was possible to see into the sunken shrine, when the doors had at length opened. The faithful poured over the just visible object, the smooth upright stone, libations of water and oil. Others extended to it their hands, seeking to touch and gain potency from the primal energy of the *lingam*.

As one looked the prudery of the European, all the emotions of Pauline and Augustinian Christianity with its long war on "the gods of the heathen", all the zeal of Jewry, came to terms with the devout puritanism of Islam and with the warriors of Aurungzeb the Emperor who had destroyed, leaving only vestiges, the predecessor of this temple. The claim of Hinduism to admiration is its immemorial syncretism and fusion of beliefs carried on through the ages, its wide monistic tolerance, wider than that of Roman paganism itself which opened its pantheon to all who would also tolerate, to Cybele and Mithras and even, if the Christians also would offer a little incense to the god-emperor, to Christ. It is easy to say that tolerance is a good thing and the first of virtues. But as I gazed at the excited worshippers of the polished stone phallus I found myself asking: How much tolerance is a good thing? Was not the dualist Aurungzeb right?

Here is a matter on which Gerald Heard writes with temperance and insight in his *Training for the Life of the Spirit*. "Once the mind, conscious and subconscious, has reached the point where it can realize that there is an eternal infinite Life, from which it has become alien and to which it must return, the mind sees that much of its sexuality has been (as Freud and D. H. Lawrence were the latest to point out) not a lust for physical sensation but the seeking for a profound union in which the girding sense of the self and its separateness may be sloughed off." This is the "Nicodemus-complex", the quest of Nicodemus.

Then Heard adds: "Thus sensing what is its real Union, the mind no longer seeks the ocean up the river, still less does it seek the living with the dead, the Life Eternal with the fading

form." And when this greater value is sensed, the whole mind turns painlessly away from its earlier silken bonds. At this stage one falls in love with an ideal beauty, which often comes with the stern face of duty; and one rejects the temporary and interim values of nature-worship, Hindu or Greek. One is no longer taken in when, for example, F. L. Lucas writes, in his introduction to the *Greek Anthology*: "The Universe is beautiful and cruel, cunning and fatuous—Aphrodite and Dionysus, Pan and Silenus. Have you ever found symbols as true? To-day your righteous gods grow in their turn pale and spectral, while ours are still as young as the poet's pen and the painter's brush." The growing *lingam* of Siva is no substitute for the beauty of the righteous gods.

One notices (and Lawrence with his Aztec gods illustrates this) how soon the worship of sex passes over, as Huxley says, into the cult of cruelty, to produce a new ecstasy, and into Rasputinism. Beyond the worship of Siva as Vishvanath lies the worship of the blood-stained Kali. The sex images surely have *mana* or power. They give an ecstatic sense of escape from oneself to something more universal. But does this more primitive something, taken by itself, offer anything beyond just itself as universal. What is there especially human, peculiarly human, in worship of fertility empty of any idea? Is a man more a man or a woman more a woman by being seen chiefly as transient incarnations of the principle of sexual reproduction? Worship of the flesh may be a means to human devotion and humility, something much better than worship of pride and wrath. "With my body I thee worship." But is not the philosophy still necessary which puts the flesh along with the world and the devil as an enemy of the rational, divine idea? One may say, in the clear, crisp language of Sappho: "And I only sleep alone". But a lament for companionship is not a paean in praise of sex-energy.

My guide was an archæologist and a sceptic. He came from the Hindu University of Benares, whose buildings were but a mile or two from this place and whose Vice-chancellor is the eminent philosopher, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who is also professor in Oxford and denizen of the rarefied intellectual atmosphere of All Souls' common room. The university of Benares, I gather, viewed the fertility rites of Vishvanath

with detached observation—tolerance—through the spectacles of anthropology.

I found myself wondering again just what was meant by tolerance. The Mahatma has written in his letters *From Yeravda Mandir*: "Tolerance implies a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahimsa* teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfections of the latter."

Did the pacifism of Mr. Gandhi spring from tolerance or did it not? What tolerance was there in disciplined non-violent non-co-operation? Charity, yes. But tolerance of what is opposed? Explicitly the Mahatma says that he does not tolerate irreligion—but only commends the golden rule of not being impatient with those in error. Did the continuation of the caste system spring from tolerance and, if so, what tolerance had the higher castes for the lower castes? The *Bhagavad-Gita* preached tolerance because of the unity of all. According to the proverb: all would be the same in a thousand years. Or did the *Gita* preach the duty of war? And tolerate it because all would come to the same in the end? One should do the duty of one's station, said the *Gita*. What was that; and why do it if all would be the same in the end?

Were good and bad the same? And did religion consist, as in the worship of Mother Kali, who danced decorated with skulls and accepted blood offerings, in arousing the sense of the terrible in nature, an awe, a pleasant ecstasy of fright which broke the walls of conscious reserve and unfroze the walls of the subconscious mind? Did religion condone and promote a Dionysiac worship, a Rasputin cult, a sexual ecstasy, in the name of fertility worship?

Who could give an answer to this problem; who could answer the god? Not Faustus. And yet there remained the clear sentiment of disgust such as once Faustus had felt with D. H. Lawrence and his blood-dripping Mexican idols, his Maenad orgy of blood. (Yet Lawrence was better in this matter in that he preached against those, too tense in emotion to be sensualists, who had sex only in and on the mind). Not "how sordid!" This was not the answer. For the worshippers were sincere, were moved, had no desire for material gain. Only the elemental

desire for potency—it was written in the face of the old woman—even the desire for the primal energy, for “the dynamic”.

“Faust, Faust,” a voice said, “is *this* dynamic? Is this the force of personality? Is this ‘Life worship’? How often from Manhattan to the desert have you worshipped at that shrine; and is it not stupidity and wastage of spirit? The *lingam* and the *yoni*—what then are these symbols? They are symbols of nothing at all beyond themselves.

“Like to Nicodemus every man desires, in his loneliness, to enter again into the womb and to be born again. Like as he folds his body at night into the shape of a child in the womb and so seeks sleep, so also he seeks the security of his mother, the tranquillity that the Great Mother of all life can give, who is also sleep and death. She is the creator of life and she is the lotus of sleep. The *yoni* is the lotus. It is both beginning and end. And it has no meaning at all. It is the flower of that drug which ends meaning, and which the lotus-eaters eat in the garden of sleep.

“What is a man, as man, other than intelligence and the power of intelligence? Did not the Average Adjuster say that man is, after all, at one with the animals, the cow and the ape, and that his power derives from the animal potency which he shares with the animals? And should he not worship that from which all life comes? But this is false—for his needs and senses and flesh will see that he pays more than his full worship to all this *Urdummheit*, this primal stupidity. Who ever knew a sex-obsessed man who was intelligent, and who commanded his world by the power of intelligence?

“Where worship is due is not to *lingam* and *yoni*, but to that which is distinctively ourselves and above ourselves and glorious with an eternal light. Worship is due not to the lotus but to the glorious sunlight, thanks to which the lotus itself has its colour and beauty, the sunlight of consciousness and idea. And there can be too much tolerance which blurs and darkens the form of the excellent.”

However the Average Adjuster said: “This is pride and lack of humility, and not democracy. No good will come of it if you despise my people who worship the *lingam* and the cow and the Nature-Mother, to whom even little children turn, the fount

of animal power. You have only the bright, noon-day, superficial wisdom of the ambitious, power-crazed West." But then the Average Adjuster was always a subtle liar. The experience of Faust was wide enough to know that. Moreover Faust was humble and despised no one. He understood this ecstatic worship of Dionysus and Demeter, of the Magna Mater, the Great Mother, the worship of the Groves of Ashtaroth. Were not Osiris and Isis themselves gods of the harvest? It may be that such a worship purges a man of Phariseeism.

The Magdalcne was not counted among the Pharisees; and so found her path to the saints. This worship might be better than the dancing Faust had seen in the hills above Heidelberg of Germans around Midsummer Day fires, dedicating their land to the pagan sun-god and to power. But, nevertheless, he found here no guidance from evil. Even the devotion of human lovers here became sacrifice to an impersonal passion and *mana* or power. There is a *mana* also in devils. Faust found here no sufficient wisdom; but only the old, old worship of the forests. Those who thought the worship wicked engaged in it elsewhere for the excitement of a Black mass, a Walpurgis-night on the Brocken. But here they did it because they thought it natural.

So I turned and left the Temple of Vishvanath, the aboriginal God of Primal Energy; and went home to my hotel and had an English lunch since this was healthier.

## CHAPTER VIII

NOT MANY miles away from the temple of Vishvanath, and indeed only at the other end of the long straggling city, is the University of Benares. As our car passed towards its entrance gates it was held up, not only by the human crowd, men, women and nude babies, but by a string of lofty camels coming out from a side street and loaded with bales of merchandise—coming from some unknown market out towards the Indian desert. On the other side were the student shops, with their text books for sale, of a university.

Although the university campus is spacious, at the entrance one's eyes are dismayed to see a large sign, announcing the university—a sign of rusty tin, half torn away. How such an aesthetic disfigurement can be tolerated for a day is beyond one's comprehension. But one is in the land of corrugated iron and of strange aesthetic contrasts.

Nevertheless the Hindu University, Benares, occupies a distinctive position in the life of India and so does its eminent President, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, historian of Indian philosophy. Not four miles from the gong-clangings of the temples this aristocratic and quiet Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, directs his university. What has he to say to his countrymen and what addition does he make to that total picture of India which includes the maharajas and the swarming millions, the temple of Vishvanath, with its fertility worship . . . and Mahatma Gandhi, with his religion of love?

His more popular views he has expressed in a little book in a series popular in the 1920's, "The To-day and To-morrow Series." It is entitled *Kalki*. It is a remarkable production for an orthodox Hindu of Brahmin birth.

Radhakrishnan begins with an estimate of the situation in the West and of the arguments of the teachers and of the common man in the West. "Our yearning for a juster world when all the mistakes are set right and tears wiped away shows, if anything, the unjust character of this world. No tangible



evidence of God's existence, no proof which will enable us to say: 'Lo! he is here' or 'Lo! he is there' is forthcoming. The silence of God when men are asking for signs is the strongest proof of atheism. If some happen to cling desperately to a faith in God in spite of all this, it is a matter not so much for surprise as for regret. Their faith is as frail as the straw clutched at by a drowning man, whatever the theologians, who have vested interests, might say . . . Any attempt to interpret ancient Scriptures to suit modern demands may shew reverence for the past but not intellectual honesty . . .

"Besides, the industrial age has made us worshippers of wealth. We are practically certain that it is only by getting rich that we can pass through the eye of a needle." So much for Radhakrishnan, the critic reproducing the arguments of Western sceptical sophistication.

From this Sir S. Radhakrishnan turns to state the constructive side. "A monkey trained to ride a bicycle, drink from a glass, and smoke a pipe is still a monkey. Technical efficiency has little to do with moral development." One wonders in passing whether an India more technically efficient, less impoverished, would not be more morally restrained. And then one thinks of the lynching taxicab drivers of a certain town in the Southern States, and one pauses . . . they were probably quite efficient taxicab drivers. What, however, one would not have in the Southern States would be murder for loot which one does have in the Punjab. (And yet, let us pause: Is it not really loot that the "poor white" is out after?)

If man is not to be a god in technology and an ape in life we must consider the ends, and our means must not pervert or be at variance with those ends. How shall we adjudge these ends? Judgement by intellectual reason alone is too narrow. It must be by the whole man and by the dramatic judgement of mankind on the grand historical scale.

"We can never get rid of religion." But we cannot put it into a straight jacket. The mystic spirit moveth whither it listeth. "If we admit the diversity of human nature, we can easily understand this variety of the appeal of God to it and the utter futility of reducing all dogma to one . . . The religion of the future must be a comprehensive one embracing within its scope all those who are religious-minded in sentiment,

allowing them full liberty so far as creeds and thought pictures are concerned . . . The end of life is not pleasure but the realization of the good."

"It is good to be devoted to the moral code, but it is wicked to be fanatic about it"—so much for the Monkey Temple, and the temple of Vishvanath down the road, and so much for the Moslems who destroyed the old temple. Here speaks the Hindu. "Violence is bound to be followed by counter-violence, and truth [then] has little chance of prevailing . . . Religious idealism seems to be the most hopeful political instrument for peace which the world has seen."

With these views it is not remarkable that the distinguished head of Benares University sees in Mahatma Gandhi a gospel-bearer for mankind. "The order of *sannyasins* (monks or religious) is the embodied conscience of mankind, reminding us of the world of higher values to which even common men respond . . . These elect souls go beyond the give-and-take of law. They witness to the evil of war by going beyond the protection of the state; but they cannot enforce it as a command on other people and deprive men of the protection of the law."

Gandhi himself explains what Radhakrishnan here means. "My creed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or room for weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent but not for a coward. I have therefore said more than once in these pages that, if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by the force of suffering, i.e. non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all of them by fighting." (*Young India*, September 16, 1927). "The world is not entirely governed by logic. Life itself involves some kind of violence, and we have to choose the path of least violence." (*Young India*, September 28, 1934).

What is Radhakrishnan's final message? "The world rests on the bedrock of *Satya* or Truth." *Satyagraha* is dedication to truth or soul-force. To this even national patriotism, even India itself, should be sacrificed. There is, then, for Radhakrishnan "the Good"—an exacting good of duty—as well as the All-Being to be worshipped.

Radhakrishnan quotes Goethe: "National animosity . . . in the lowest degrees of civilization is always strongest and

most violent. But there is a point where it vanishes—where we stand, as it were, above the nations and we feel the happiness or misery of a neighbouring people as though it were our own.” Above all nations is humanity, in short. It is the title of a little humanist book which I have been concerned with others to compile.

“There is no other God,” Radhakrishnan continues, “than Truth, and the only name for the realization of Truth is love or *ahimsa*. Knowledge of truth and the practice of love are impossible without self-purification. Only the pure in heart can see God . . . Perfect compassion untouched by condescension, washed clean of pride, even of the pride of doing good, is the highest religious quality.” It is the quality which Radhakrishnan proclaims that the Mahatma manifests. And who shall differ from this great Hindu in his description of true and undefiled religion, a religion which finds its kingdom not in nature-worship but within the heart, and there its freedom? Freedom, then, here is perfect compassion, a service given because the pure heart dictates.

## CHAPTER IX

A LONG journey through Nagpur and over Hyderabad and Bangalore has carried me to the farthest South. In the little junction of Itarsi I have spent a night in the station waiting-room in the suffocating heat, a wait made less intolerable by the courtesy of the staff. Wrong information, the plague of the traveller, given to me at Nagpur has cut down my stay in Bangalore to a matter of minutes and has deprived me of the pleasure of a long talk, as had been arranged, with Sir Thumboo Chitty and of enjoying the hospitality of the Maharaja of Mysore. Sir Thumboo has waited for me a day and has left for Mysore City, the Northern capital of the State.

Mid-April, 1947, finds me crossing the mountain range which divides Mysore from Malabar and alighting at Cochin. Here the inlet of the Indian Ocean divides into two branches surrounding an island. Facing the island on the south eastern mainland is Ernakulam, capital of Cochin's maharajas. Facing it on the other or coastal side is British Cochin, which once was Dutch Cochin. White painted coastal boats lie off its lotus shore. White houses, some with peaked gable roofs, as in a picture by Vermeer, come down to the water's edge. The sleepy waters lap their gardens, placed between palms. The sward is a satisfying green. Here, over this ground, Portuguese and Dutch and British fought for possession and for trade. In the quiet streets, as one looks at the lazy ease of these verandahs, no one would suspect it to-day.

Cochin is an old town. Near here landed St. Francis Xavier, the great Jesuit missionary of the East, one of the apostles of China. Near here also landed, according to an ancient tradition which the best scholars do not treat with contempt, the Apostle St. Thomas who later was speared to death and, also according to tradition, lies buried in the cathedral church of San Thome, just outside Madras. At least the earliest Jewish records tell that, when the Jews arrived in India in the middle of the first century of the Christian Era, they found a Christian

or Nazarene community already established, which had reached this Malabar coast by following the trade route to India, newly developed in the first century and using the monsoon which carried boats from the domains of imperial Rome across the high sea.

A few steps from the shore and a little exploration will bring one to the synagogue of the "white" Jews of Cochin, once numbering thousands but now only a few hundred. (Beyond lies the synagogue of the "black" Jews, Ethiopian "converts of the gate", who, while maintaining the ancient faith of Abraham, complain that they are treated by those of the pure Semitic blood more like the children of Hagar than of Sarah and Rebecca and Rachel). But here they lie buried, the rabbis and their flock, not exiles so much as denizens of a land of their adoption. It was adopted nearly two entire millennia ago, before Portuguese or Dutch or British were heard of, by these children of the Diaspora, the Dispersion of Israel after the destruction, by Titus the Emperor, of the Holy City and the Temple.

The synagogue itself, although small, is a thing of beauty and a worthy object of pilgrimage. Year by year for these twenty centuries here has been unrolled and read, with head covered, the scroll of the sacred Torah, the law of Moses who lead his people out of Egypt, the law given on Sinai. Day by day the walls have heard the echo of the Hebrew prayer, "Shemah, Israel, Adonai Elohenu Adonai echod," "Hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is One God, Him only shalt thou worship." To adorn the house of worship of the Lord Adonai, the One, the Almighty, even from China precious tiles were brought six centuries ago, of a blue of surpassing rarity, the work of the cunning craftsman. Here are to be seen the records also of the privileges granted to the Jewish colony by the early rulers. The date is A.D. 319. The privilege is given by Ravi Varma, emperor of Malabar, in the thirty-sixth year of his happy reign. An exclusive God of an exclusive people with exclusive privileges. How much is the universal message of Isaiah, the message of the world Messiah, still needed. . . . Alas! although the Lord is one, the flock can no more live in charity together, "white" Jews and "black" Jews, than could Samaritans and Judaeans. Instead they quarrel about their

blood, like Nazis, and about which is of the seed of Abraham. However this preoccupation with blood descent is natural enough in caste-ridden India where the Lord will undoubtedly raise up to Himself children of Abraham even out of stones and from the heathen and the Gentiles, the *Goyim*.

With reluctance I leave the town where, before his bones were returned to his native Portugal, Vasco da Gama lay buried in the white Franciscan church. Remote beyond the torrid plains of India where the sun beats down on the rolling dust clouds, here is a place of quiet and dignity where life goes its way uninterrupted by the feet of politicians, and where men and their wives can sit down under the great palm trees in the expectation of peace and a middling well-being. In the old palace of the maharajahs the mural paintings display again the cult of nature and of fertility such as the Romans of Pompeii displayed with less religious pretension. The serpent in this Eden, this Indian paradise, is a winged one, the fly which brings the disease of elephantiasis, a vast swelling of the body—an evil surely well within the scope of medical science to banish. The Indian *dharma* or way of life, the humane ritual of the seasons, turns its slow wheel, this curse apart, in an unexampled peace, and children succeed their parents in the accustomed tasks.

Here a man might say, in the words of a great French administrator, Thomas Robert Bugeaud: "Je serais l'homme du monde le plus heureux si . . . je pouvais vivre paisiblement de mes champs jusqu'à la tombe, sans être autre chose que laboureur".

Beyond Cochin, spreading south into that state of Travancore whither I am bound, lie the sea inlets and backwaters, sometimes as broad as lakes, sometimes as narrow as canals, always palm fringed. The temperature is that which one might expect in a land of palms, not as hot as in the great Ganges flats in May, but humid and to my taste pleasant. Others would find the land enervating, although the climate does not seem to destroy the energy of the brown boatmen who make in six days or less the journey in their craft from Cochin to the capital of Travancore, Trivandrum. To-day, not only aeroplane and railway but a magnificent *autobahn* give alternative and far quicker means of making the journey. Nevertheless, even

during my all-too-brief stay, a rainfall of fifteen inches in three days has brought the floods out and some sections of the land communications are under water. Only the rowing boat and air transport can be sure of getting through. It was my misfortune that my route over this section had to be by air. Only the run from Trivandrum to Cape Cormorin was I able to do by car. As a consequence, I could only see the network of waterways spread beneath me and, mid-way, the city of Quilon, that "Koulam" of which Marco Polo says that it was so abundantly supplied with pepper.

I had dreamed of spending a day or more in the boats and of clearing my thoughts as I heard the ripple of the waters under the stroke of the rowers. But economy of time and the general, if erroneous, opinion that I would prefer modern conveniences decided otherwise. My Indian friends were firmly of the view that after the first couple of hours or so I should find the boat trip very boring. The modernized East does not understand my Western passion for measured slowness in those few experiences in life in which an elysium equilibrium has been reached, or how I can say with Faust, "stay" to the spirit of such moments. How firmly I had to stand against the desire to rush me from one dead museum to another, or even to see a big game preserve, when I would have preferred above all else to watch a lotus afloat on the waters and to construct a poem that could outlive the lotus and the poet.

In Trivandrum I am the guest of His Highness the Maharaja, the last of a long line of rulers proud of their independence and that their country has never been conquered in battle, neither by the Moghuls nor ever at any other time in the record of India. The airport at Trivandrum shows from above as a long white strip amid thick palm trees which almost obscure the capital, with its sixty thousand or more inhabitants, although not the plan of the central temple. One of the state cars waits for me at the airport and sweeps me off to the State guest house where, after refreshment, white-gloved attendants serve me, and an Irish geologist, a dinner which would not shame *Claridge's Hotel* in London. The white sand, I learn, of the airport is not so innocent. Amid its gleaming whiteness are black traces. The black sand betrays the presence of thorium, one of

the uranium group of fissionable materials. And there is enough thorium in that beach to blow up the world, if man is so minded and his intelligence is so warped or his need to conquer so great. It is not perhaps irrelevant to mention that the Communist Party is probably nowhere better organized than in Travancore.

This foreground of scientific information, momentous in the age of atomic race-destruction, one sets ironically, as progress, against the background of palm leaves and plantains, of red mud walls and good adobe houses, with nude babies and an intelligent people, and with (sealed to all not "of Hindu race or religion") the large red-stone central temple of Vishnu, its Brahmin quarter, its great bathing pool and its lofty mitre-shaped tower with figures in high relief of men and gods.



## CHAPTER X

I AM IN Trivandrum on the Tamil New Year. The Maharaja's Ministers have gone early to the New Palace to convey their felicitations to His Highness. As I dress for breakfast I hear the boom of the salute fired by cannon, a twenty-one gun salute. For in India the size of a prince, the degree of his prestige and rank, can be judged by the number of guns to which he is entitled as salute.

As I dress I look out on flowering trees and catch sight of the azure flash of a blue jay's wing—or was it a kingfisher's?—and of brilliant yellow birds with black caps. Such is the incurious quality of men that they can live their lives amid the glories of Eden without seeking, like Adam, to give names to the trees or (as I found) to know their names, whether in Tamil or English. Amid the bright yellow rajmali trees which also adorn Madras, the orange yellow sweet-smelling asoka tree and the red Indian coral tree I see one, flaming red and most beautiful of all of which I could not learn the name. But I did learn that those who look up at it and get its pollen in their eyes suffer from a painful inflammation. Thus in the indifferent economy of nature good is balanced with evil. It is for men to make the choice of the lesser evil. . .

The energetic and able Diwan or Premier, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, has arranged for me a visit to the other end of the State, to Cape Cormorin, the southern extremity of India, the *comaria akron* of the Hellenic geographer Ptolemy, who lived in Alexandria when Marcus Aurelius ruled the Western world. My guide is the state archivist, Dr. Vasudeva Poduval. In the early morning we begin what is for me this great visit of exploration.

At one point we are stopped by police because the cars of the Maharaja and the outriders are due to pass, as he returns from some ceremony. As the princely car flashes past His Highness' subjects bow from the stomach about twice as profoundly as a German of the *Kaiserzeit* used to bow. We are

in a land where every man can claim to detect in himself a god; and where divinity does more than hedge a king. In 1750 the then Maharaja, Prince Marthanda Varma, laid down his sword by which he had unified the Kingdom, dedicated the state to Vishnu under the aspect of Sri Padmanabhaswami, and took the title of Sri Padmanabhadasa, "Servant of God".

In part Trivandrum, with its wide neat roads and white stone walls around villa residences, might be the more palm bedecked parts of some prosperous Florida township. However, when the residential section around the palace is left behind, the illusion departs. What remains of the town gives me delight, but it is the delight of the view of some Malayan or Pacific island village.

The administration of Travancore, if paternal, is progressive. A delightful woman member of the legislature, with whom I take tea, tells me that not only are there women legislators but women police and—lest this be taken as no assured sign of progress—that Travancore boasts the highest educational level anywhere in India, the highest literacy rate and fine agricultural research stations. I see before me a very fine metalled road.

But what interests me more is to look at the Indian aspects of the scene, the waterways with their primitive boats drawn alongside, the substantial houses made of adobe and roofed with palm leaves, the rich red earth through which the road passes and on which the crowded and lofty palms stand. To see this, and to scent the warm refreshing smell of earth and vegetation after rain, is what is good. The steaming heat even of April is no discomfort to me. Here, I say to myself, I could live as I choose, write poetry, be happy. One would not have to be a Gauguin to find satisfaction in living in Tahiti or Travancore.

There are, I reflect, two ways of living, two major ways of living. The one is to live happily, "according to Nature", like the original Epicureans, to find some simple way of living which is adapted to one's own temperament as a civilized, rational individual, and then to be content to keep to it. It has found modern exponents in Mr. Richard Aldington and in Mr. Lin Yu-tang—but it is the oldest of traditions with the Chinese, their poets, painters and philosophers. The other is to

live conscientiously by duty, with regard to the miseries which still fill so much of the world; beneath the palm leaf to see the poverty; to deplore that the people do not seem to want more; and to bestir oneself to reform them, even to reform out of existence the Maharaja and his palaces and officials. This is the way that leads to fame and power and ambition gratified. Could it be possible, I wondered, as we sped on our route to Cape Cormorin, to join something of both ways or would this be to fail in both? Was Huxley right in *After Many Summers*? Was it possible both soberly to estimate what was the simple and satisfying life for oneself, perhaps amid these palm trees; and also to be disinterestedly concerned about the real and remediable sorrows of those whose lot was hard, more hard than by right or reason it should be? In this way in two aspects, personal and social, one would seek "to realise the good". Perhaps Mr. Gandhi, when I saw him, would settle the problem for me . . . He perhaps had a Third Way, neither Epicurean "naturalism" nor the Kantian "law", but creative, spontaneous compassion, the way of St. Francis and St. Bonaventure.

Trivandrum has its great temple of Creation. But Travancore is a land of churches. A third of the population is Christian, the major part Catholic. A considerable section, however, is Jacobite, owing allegiance to the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch. Here on our right rises, above the tropical green of the roadside, a Carmelite monastery. On the left, further on at Kottayam, is a courtyard, uncouth with mud, with beyond it a church marking one of the spots where the great apostle of the East, St. Francis Xavier—treading as he believed in the footsteps of the companion of the Lord, Thomas called Didymus—had preached, coming on from another landing place in Tinivelly. One church I decided to enter along with my companion, whose father was a Brahmin and his mother a Sudra, or manual worker. In the window of the house at the side I could see the bearded Indian Catholic priest.

The church is large, plain, whitewashed. It gains dignity from its very simplicity. The Indian sun pours warmly upon the white walls, the apse, the altar. In front is a large painting or ikon upon a sub-altar. I have seen in China paintings of Our Lady as a Chinese, very beautiful paintings. Here Christ appears as an Indian. The Indian, the Mahatma

himself, never forgets that the Nazarene was an Oriental. Here the Christ of the Indian road has become entirely one of His Indian people.

In conversations as I move about I learn many things. One Brahmin tells me that all Brahminism has done is to provide a caste system. It is not religion that touches the life of the people. It goes on over their heads and their interest in the temple is slight. Caste is the fundamental fact. The *Gita*, he says, is rather a curse than a blessing, for it teaches no distinction between better or worse, but merely teaches performing one's function in one's caste. Another Brahmin, with his head shaved in front, and a knot like a Red Indian brave's at the back, tells me that the clue to everything is the organic notion of society, head, arms, belly, with every nation performing its function in the whole, and every individual also. The idea, I recall, is as old as the parable of Menenius Agrippa, recited by the historian Livy.

Also I learn of the pleasures of this people and their miseries. They make an intoxicant from the coconut, a strong intoxicant. The state permits licensed houses for the sale of it, reflecting that it will be drunk anyhow, and so the politicians had better collect their tax, which will still smell sweet to political noses. There is no little drinking by the peasants. But there is also much disease. The Salvation Army, good men who ride to the place of need in a practical way on a bicycle, have established a well-equipped hospital, better than the State hospital. It attracts patients from miles around. One ward bears the inscription: "To the glory of God, on the centenary of General W. B. Booth". As we leave the Catholic church my archivist says to me: "The strength of Christianity is that it understands pain."

We go on with our journey. One cannot but be impressed with the immense population that the country supports. For thirty miles or more the line of cottages along the high road seems to have been almost continuous. Poverty in part—and there seems to me less poverty than in any other part of India that I have seen—is a function of population. The problem of India is the extreme case of a world problem. Humanity left to its own devices prefers, at a choice, to increase its numbers rather than to raise its material standard, satisfaction in which

lies too far remote from the very poor anyhow. It is the Indian, the Chinese, the still so poor Soviet peasant and worker who multiplies, not the denizens of Park Lane and Park Avenue or the technicians of Omaha and Sheffield. And if "education" will increase the demand for gadgets and radio and "a higher standard of living", this education, as was seen in Lancashire, will have to be thrust upon "the people" against their wish, led by an enlightened few. With higher wages they might ask for more. It might be worth trying. So might agricultural research and reform.

For the moment the high wage only means that still more of the family take time off to live on the wage-earner. In the spare time they multiply and replenish the land. Is this absence of material desire good or, despite the heat, should they all be more energetic and ask for more radios and gramophones and electric washers as "culture"? Or only for better hospitals and still better education? The issue may be whether men want pleasure or want power—or to be guided by a few more "spiritually conscious" in the vanguard, who want neither.

If men had their hearts' desire would they become, like fascists, more and more covetous for power and more in love with death until they had conquered the stars? Or would they produce more and more five-year plans hatched by commissars in order to divide under the commissars, between the purposes of war and peace, the product of industry which state-regulated scientists had produced; and so dominate the world by the massiveness of Soviet Hitlerite Power? Or would they labour and give birth in an endless human ritual of duty, centred around an everlasting divine worship, as in Paraguay under the Jesuits? Or would they live as in Travancore? Or would they just have café conversation?

It is no sign of poverty but of choice that the babies and small children run about almost nude or quite nude. It is a matter of choice, and not of a compulsory inability to meet a demand in these people's minds for more and more textiles and European clothes. Quite wealthy men walk the streets, bronze chested, with only a loin cloth. Sometimes some perverse desire to play the *saddhu* or fakir leads a man, as it led the Russian Doukhobors, to appear quite nude. The prudish—or patient—Canadian police would have a busy

job here. Twice on the route I pass a woman walking by, wild-eyed, but with not a stitch on. My companion tells me these devotees of nature could be locked up as mad—or maybe they are *saddhus*, holy folk—but, if they do no harm, such action would only provoke resentment.

The Travancore villages are pleasant, green and neat—a delight to the eye after the mud and dust bowls of the Punjab and the United Provinces. After a while we pass through Suchindrum. Here is a famous temple of the Hindu Trinity, the Trimurti—Brahmā, Vishnu, Siva. They are preparing for a festival in the near future, a village *fiesta*. Under the shadow of the many storied temple structure, a product of the Sixteenth Century carved deep in red sandstone with contorted gods, in the village street lie poles, wheels, axles. All are to be put together later and the lynch pin fitted to the cumbersome temple car, its wheels a foot thick in the rim, in which the decorated image of the god will be dragged around the precincts. More pleasing to me is the temple pool with, rising in the midst of it, the small carved shrine, with its pillars and masonry painted black and white by the water's edge.

One of the more pleasing customs of Hinduism is this of placing below the temple tower a pool, often quite large, for ablutions. A red stone edging, often a heavy stone verandah, will surround the temple tank, with steps leading down into the water. The conditions of the temples confirmed the remarks I had heard earlier. They did not seem to be much frequented. Sometimes the smaller ones become derelict and it is not impossible then that they become used as public lavatories just as the public monuments of Naples are used by the reprobate Neapolitans. This is what had happened to a small temple, elaborately carved, placed near to the Cape itself and dating from the Chola dynasty of the Tenth Century. Now the doors were locked. I was, however, assured that, had we seen inside, we should only have seen the inevitable *lingam* stone.

At last Cape Cormorin is reached, not too late for a very pleasant meal at the rest house. A small Catholic church crowns the promontory. The fisher folk here are Catholic, descendants of the converts of the great Jesuit mission of St. Francis Xavier. Jacobite Christianity, in order to acclimatize itself, to its own misfortune came to terms with the caste

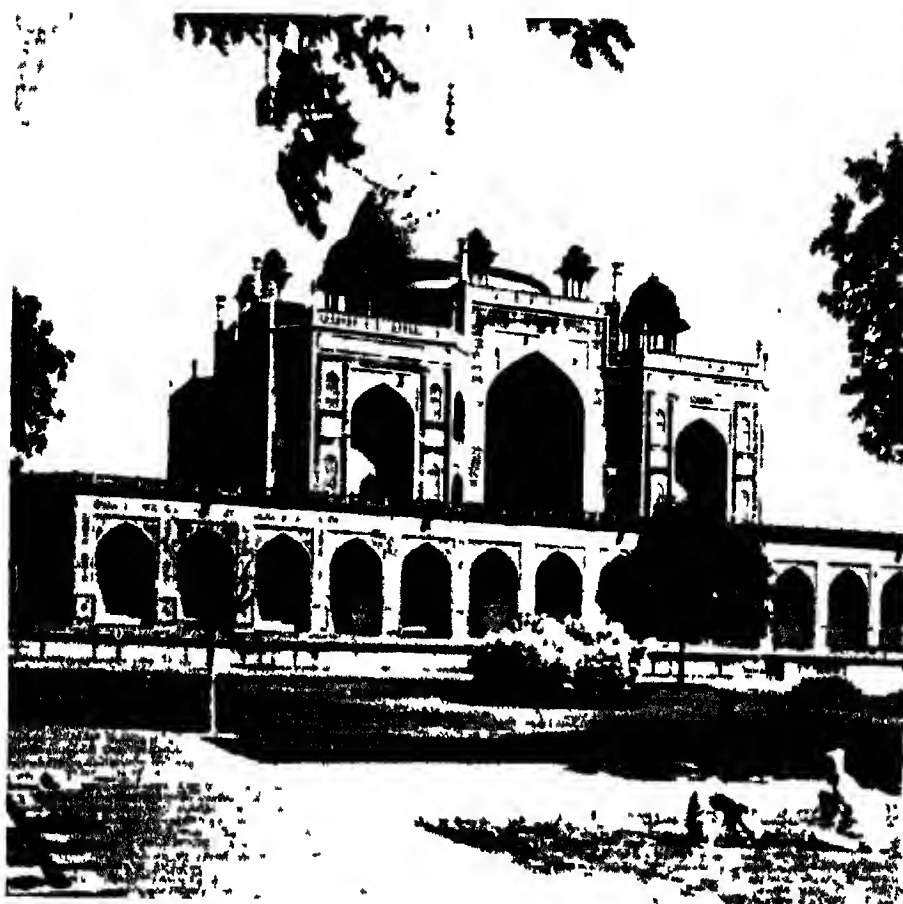
system, but the Jesuit mission had its success with those whom Hinduism had left with the more despised forms of work. At the moment, however, the chief pleasure I found, when some gamins who wished to show me the place for a small consideration had been convinced that I could be my own guide, was in the quiet view from the promontory, with the waves occasionally breaking over the jetty wall and an interrupted view out South, over the Indian Ocean, to where Ceylon must be. Indian sailing dhows, with red sails in sharp curved triangles, not so striking in outline as a Chinese junk but pleasing, were on the horizon. This place was to be for me Farthest South. The delight, which Ouspenski had, of seeing the shrines of the Buddha in Ceylon must wait. Like Ouspenski, however, I am concerned to confirm in the East an aspect of experience, and to discover a philosophy of value for the West, whether or not we call it *Tertium Organum*, "the third instrument" of thought.



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India.*

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel





*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India]*

The mausoleum of the Emperor Humayun at Delhi

## CHAPTER XI

THE RETURN journey was not without its events. About half way on the road back to Trivandrum we stopped to visit the Old Palace of the Maharajas of Travancore.

The New Palace in the middle of the capital had impressed me on first sight as reminiscent in its style of Nepal or of Burma. Here are the gable roofs with up-curving ends that give such pleasure to the eye and which connect with the use of wood in building. Here is heavy wooden lattice work for windows. What indeed this style resembled, if only as the Nineteenth Century resembles the Sixteenth, had I but known then, was that of the Old Palace at Padmanabhapuram, guiltless although the latter was of modern luxuries and conveniences. Through its Sixteenth Century courtyards we went, my friend Paduval and myself, and climbed its narrow stairs, as steep as though they led to a hay loft. Here we found the bed chamber of state of the old Kings of Travancore, the floors of a kind of black polished lacquer, an Indian speciality, its windows of latticed sandalwood, the vast bed a present from Dutch colonists and still bearing evidence of the precise style and solid comforts of Seventeenth Century Amsterdam. Only a generation ago this palace was empty but regarded as so sacred that boys led by curiosity would visit its desertion and then run away in fright. Now it is swept, garnished and restored.

The walls are painted with scenes, by no means ascetic, from the lives of the gods. Here are figures with wasp waists, immense breasted, with faces and bellies black and with red hands. They are adorned with the conch of Travancore and with the "star of David" symbol which one sees throughout India, just as I had seen the swastika—symbol of luck and of recurrence in the life cycle—everywhere from Travancore to the chest of the figure of Buddha in Hangchow.

Outside the rooms, behind window alcoves which overlook the courtyard, are long corridors, dark even at this time of full

sunshine. One notes the antique oil lamps, in brass, shaped like the Greek lamps, with holes for the wicks. Even in its glory this must have been a place of almost gloomy shade; after dusk a place of flickering lights and narrow passages. Only where, below, the black polished floor widens to a broad space for the dancers, religious dancers, is the impression of heavy gloom dispelled.

My greatest pleasure was in the courtyard, quiet as some monastic cloister, looking up at the curved pagoda-like roofs and detecting on a small tower there an ancient Spanish clock which, with dignified precision, calm inexorability, counted out the hours as it might have done in some convent in Toledo. Here one was away from feverishness and pictorial nightmares. Time and eternity had come to an understanding. The outside scene with its palms might recall a spice isle of the Pacific, some untrustworthy Eden. But here was dignity and quiet, an aesthetic pleasure, an assured repose.

This marriage of time and eternity involves an understanding which Indian art surprisingly lacks. It is able to preach the doctrine of creation, as fertile as India herself, and of destruction, of life, fever, imagination, passion, *maya*, illusion. But the doctrine of Brahm, of oneness, it fails to preach. One thing is lacking in this Indian art, except the Buddhist—rest, tranquillity. It is a tortured, restless art, as restless as the six-armed figure of the dancing Siva. Perhaps it is beyond the power of any art to depict Brahm Himself, the Incomprehensible, the Absolute, the *That*, since this is to change, in St. Paul's phrase, "the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man". Nevertheless Buddhism seems by symbolism to convey this teaching of the wisdom of the sapphire peace so much better than Hinduism, while Mussulman, Quaker and Catholic suggest it in mosque and garden and *angelus* and *sanctus*.

Certainly Indian art fails when it presents some fantastic concept of Brahm seated on a lotus sprung from the navel of Vishnu. Here symbolism seizes art and twists art violently to its end in defiance of all the harmonies. Art has become too much a matter of the head, without spontaneous grace. Perhaps the object is to teach a lesson. And after all Brahm is Siva and flux in one of His Persons, even if, in another Person,

He is the undepictable and eternal Self of all Being, the eternal Observer, unmoving and unmoved.

My guide points out to me in the museum a brass figure of the Buddha in sexual relation with a fairy, but still retaining his impassive calm. One wonders what fevered mind conceived this odd variant of the temptation of Antony; and whether the artist supposed that the effect of this image could be calm. There was here neither the true Buddhist tranquillity nor the Chinese humour. I was nauseated by this stupidity.

Late that afternoon finds us back in Trivandrum. The following day at five in the evening I am summoned to a reception by the Maharaja at the New Palace. The sentries and palace servants salute as my car drives up. Inside Western art has been combined with Eastern. There are alabaster jars at the foot of the grand stairs, that light up when the electricity is put on. In an ante-room the Maharaja, my host, along with his mother and his sister, greet me and bid me be seated. This is a country of materlinear succession and mother right. It is the Maharani who does most of the talking. Although he was educated in India the Maharaja leaves on one the impression of a young man trained in the English public school tradition, with his politely enthusiastic "Oh! yes really" and "Oh! no really". As in any German princely court of two centuries ago the monarch is interested in his soldiering. But this pleasant young ruler, in his close fitting white uniform, by all accounts is enlightened himself as well as having the advantage of personal charm and of being assisted by one of the cleverest premiers in India.

A new constitution has been drafted which at least compromises with the demands of the Congress Opposition, and the ruler of Travancore can claim to have led the way in breaking down the caste system so far as this was symbolized by the exclusion of outcastes from the temples. The campaign indeed against the exclusion of "untouchables" was begun, some years earlier, by a Christian and an "untouchable" who together walked along the forbidden roads near the temples. Those not Hindu "by race or religion", who do not know the purification rites, are still excluded from the mysteries. As one Indian said to me, "if I have a good house of my own I do not

want to open it to everybody or to go into other people's houses. Why do you?"

The Proclamation of 1936 reads: "Profoundly convinced of the truth and validity of our religion, believing that it is based on divine guidance and all-comprehending toleration, knowing that in its practice it has throughout the centuries adapted itself to the need of the changing times, solicitous that none of our Hindu subjects should, by reason of birth, caste or community, be denied the consolation and solace of the Hindu Faith, we have decided and hereby declare, ordain and command that, subject to such rules and conditions as may be laid down and imposed by us for preserving their proper atmosphere and maintaining their rituals and observances, there should henceforth be no restriction placed on any Hindu by birth or religion on entering or worshipping at temples controlled by us or our Government." Even with the reservation that those not Hindu either by race or by religion are still excluded, this tolerance is at least as large as that of the Christian place of worship in South Africa which is alleged to have excluded Mr. Gandhi on grounds of colour.

After a brief hesitation, the Mahatma, the champion of the *harijans* or outcastes and the protagonist in Hinduism against degradation by caste distinctions as by colour bars, became an enthusiastic supporter of the Temple-entry Proclamation. An American pastor has recently declared that from a given day he proposes not only to live with coloured people but to be regarded as a coloured man. (To the Chinese all whites are "coloured men"—"red barbarians".) So the Mahatma has chosen to throw in his lot with the outcastes and to live among them. He came to Travancore in 1937. In *Harijan*, his journal, he wrote:

"Untouchability, though an excrescence, has taken such hold on the Hindu world that whenever a Hindu breaks through it and declares against it, he excites admiration among reformers and becomes the object of fierce criticism from the orthodox . . . Only a few years ago in Vaikam the caste Hindus threatened violence if Harijans crossed even certain roads leading to the Vaikam temples. Now every temple has been opened to Harijans on absolutely the same terms as to any caste Hindu."

In Travancore at Vaikam the Mahatma said: "I have so often said and certainly hold the belief that our temples were losing their sanctity by reason of our criminal neglect of our untouchable brethren."

In the great Christian centre of Kottayam, he said: "I know that Kottayam is a stronghold of the Christians of Travancore. Christians know there is between them and me an invisible but unbreakable bond.

"I know many Christians throughout the length and breadth of India do not regard Hinduism as a fraud upon humanity or a body of bad usages and superstitions. A religion which has produced Ramakrishna, Chaitanya, Sankara and Vivikananda cannot be a body of superstitions. As you know, and if you do not know it, I want to declare, I personally hold all principal religions of the world to be not only true but also to be equal. I have endeavoured to study the Bible with the eyes of a devout Christian and the Koran with the eyes of a devout Mussulman, and I have not hesitated to assimilate whatever I have found to be good in both these scriptures.

"Latterly I have been endeavouring to describe to vast assemblages of men and women I have addressed what I regard as the essence of Hinduism, and I have been suggesting to them one incredibly simple *mantra* of the *Ishopanishad*, and as you know it is one of the Upanishads that enjoy the sanctity of the Vedas. The *mantra* describes God as the Creator, the Ruler, and the Lord. The seer to whom this *mantra* or verse was revealed was not satisfied with the magnificent statement that God was to be found everywhere. But he went further and said: 'Since God pervades everything nothing belongs to you, not even your own body. God is the undisputed, unchallengeable Master of everything you possess'.

"If it is universal brotherhood—not only brotherhood of all human beings, but of all living things—I find it in this *mantra*. If it is unshakable faith in the Lord and Master—and all the adjectives you can think of—I find it in this *mantra*. If it is the idea of complete surrender to God and of the faith that He will supply all that I need, then again I say I find it in this *mantra*. Since he pervades every fibre of my being and of all of you, I derive from it the doctrine of equality of all creatures in earth and it should satisfy the cravings of all philosophical

communists. This *mantra* tells me that I cannot hold as mine anything that belongs to God and that, if my life and that of all who believe in this *mantra* has to be a life of perfect dedication, it follows that it will have to be a life of continual service of fellow creatures.

"I do not wish to hide from you the fact that I am not unaware of many superstitions that go under the name of Hinduism. I am most painfully conscious of all superstitions that are to be found masquerading as Hinduism, and I have no hesitation to call a spade a spade. I have not hesitated to describe untouchability as the greatest of all these superstitions. I do not believe that these superstitions form part of Hinduism. The very canons of interpretation laid down by Hinduism teach me that whatever is inconsistent with the truth I have expounded to you, and what is hidden in the *mantra* I have named, must be summarily ejected as not belonging to Hinduism.

"We all consciously or unconsciously pine and strive for peace on earth and goodwill amongst mankind. I am convinced that we shall find neither peace nor goodwill among men and women through strife among men of different religions, through disputation among them. We shall find truth and peace and goodwill if we approach the humblest of mankind in a prayerful spirit. Anyway that is my humble appeal to Christians who may be present at this great meeting."

Elsewhere the Mahatma made this very interesting statement on Hinduism. "I saw quite clearly that the priest who was interpreting each statue in his own choice Hindi did not want to tell me that each of these figures was God. But without giving me that particular interpretation he made me realize that these temples were so many bridges between the Unseen, Invisible and Indefinable God and ourselves who are infinitesimal drops in the Infinite Ocean. We the human family are not all philosophers. We are of the earth very earthy and we are not satisfied with contemplating the Invisible God. Somehow or other we want something we can touch, something we can see, something before which we can kneel down. It does not matter whether it is a book or an empty stone building, or a stone building inhabited by numerous figures . . . Then I ask you to approach these temples not as if they represented a body

of superstitions. If you will approach these temples with faith in them, you will know each time you visit them you will come away from them purified, and with your faith more and more in the living God."

Before I left the Palace of Trivandrum, Her Highness the Maharani, the mother of this bachelor prince, put me through a fairly searching cross-examination on the state of India and of the world. What was the meaning of liberty? Did it indeed exist in Russia, and in what sense? But then was full liberty anywhere practicable, for, if so, what would be the meaning of licence? She impressed me as a lady not to be trifled with, who had thought not a little, and whose mind when made up was firmly made up. She would not be amused by contradiction. I also gathered that, in touching the constitutional discussions about the future of India, the rulers of Travancore saw no purpose in attending conferences of princes "to wait and decide how to wait and see".

The interview over with this enlightened prince, Faust bowed, and to the salute of the guard passed the grand escalier to the entrance, and left in the car the State of Travancore had provided.



## CHAPTER XII

IT IS THE Sunday next after Easter day. The most casual visitor to Travancore as he goes along the highroads and observes the frequency of the churches cannot help noticing how far Travancore is Christian. Alas! there are so many sects represented, some by church buildings so un-Indian that, transplanted, they would not be out of place in Wichita, Kansas, or in Tooting Bec, London. However, many such as the Salvation Army, who weekly parade their lads with flags and their lasses in red blouses, with tambourines, are doing good practical work. At least this variety serves to demonstrate to the Hindu the Christian version of tolerance, disputatious though it may be. This variety may have its merit, since it involves not only acceptance of the Vedic wisdom that truth has many approaches, but also of the wisdom that man lives by conscience and faith in the highest truth which he can grasp. This truth may be a jealous truth insisting, even presumptuously, upon distinguishing true from false, white from black, good from evil, as much as does any rabbi or Mussulman. Too much it may be the denominations dispute about what Blake called "poor spiritual knowledge not worth a button". And too much they dispute from the very human failing of emotional prejudice and the eristic love of disputation. But, at least, they also believe.

The largest single Christian community in Travancore is also by far the oldest, the Jacobite Christians who hold to the faith which they claim—and the claim many scholars accept as fully possible—was first preached to them by St. Thomas the Apostle. Certainly the Christians were in India by the Second Century. The records indicate that they were there earlier. According to tradition St. Thomas landed in Kranganore, where Greek and Roman coins have been found, in A.D. 47 and established seven churches. "Nazarenes", not Christians, these Indian Christians call themselves in legal documents. Now it was not until the church had fully developed in Antioch that the believers were called Christians. The earlier believers

—and among them would be St. Thomas—were called Nazarenes . . . Be the conclusion of this what it may, it is clear that the lure of India was as strong in the ancient world as ever since, and that somewhere about the turn of the era an adventurous Greek discovered the secret of the monsoon wind which, when it blows, can carry a man's bark to India very swiftly. And, with the discovery, many a merchant, the Jews not latest, took the quick route East to do trade.

These Jacobite Christians, amounting in all India to about two million, sub-divide. Some accept the allegiance of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and are accepted by him, and some accept but are not accepted by him. "Jacobite", so called from a bishop James Baradaï in the days of Justinian the Emperor, is another name for Monophysite, one of the subtle heresies of Eastern Christianity which broke away from Catholic Christianity after the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451). It asserts the divinity of Christ to the exclusion of his humanity—going so far in the opposite direction to Unitarianism as to approach the position of those of the Docetic heresy, that the Christ only appeared to be, like a ghost, but never really was man. The godhead expressed itself in the *maya*, or under the appearance of man, rather as Siva is one Person or appearance of Brahm. But the Indian Jacobites got to no such extreme as this. All that the Jesuit missionaries could take exception to at the council of Daimpur in 1599 was that the Jacobites had come to terms with the pagan caste system and had compromised with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. To-day, half their number has recently re-united with their Catholic brethren of the Latin rite, who accepted the teaching of the later Apostle of the Orient, St. Francis Xavier, and his followers. They retain, however, the ancient rite, the Ritual of James the cousin of the Lord, as embodied in the Antiochian Liturgy.

This Low Sunday I was invited to breakfast by the Most Reverend the Archbishop Mar Ivanios, metropolitan of all Christians in India of the Jacobite Rite in communion with the Holy See. Even in London, even in America, I had heard about the fame of His Grace Mar Ivanios. He is an energetic old man with the face of an Elisha, tall, thin, abundantly white bearded, the beard framing the dusky face.

Later in the morning he takes me to see his research fisheries and up a hill to see where he has placed the site of his new College which is to be part of the university, a site from which all Trivandrum, and the sea, and Travancore up to the mountains can be viewed as from a lighthouse, a veritable city set on a hill which cannot be hid and a beacon of learning.

Before breakfast, however, I attend mass. An acolyte kneels beside me to guide me in the mysteries of a complicated service. The procedure resembles more closely the Greek Orthodox than the Latin ritual. Curtains are drawn and drawn back as in some ancient mystery play. The communion is in both kinds. The words of consecration are in ancient Syriac or Aramaic, in the very language of the Lord Himself. Hooded and chasubled the ancient man, with his archbishop's cross before him, completed the mysteries. Apart from the unusual colour of the robes, I could not help but notice distinctively Indian features—the silver cobras which flanked the silver cross on either side, the veil of Indian silk. But what was used instead of a sanctus bell was not Indian, it was the immemorial sistrum of the Egyptians, a racquet shaped instrument surrounded by little silver bells, which when shaken gave out a light and musical sound as in the days when it was used by the priests of Isis.

When later I visited Madras I then made a pilgrimage to the near-by cathedral church of ancient Mylapur. Here on Corpus Christi Day, 1521, Fr. Antonio Gil celebrated mass and here is the list of the bishops—"episcopi Melenporenses"—who since Sebastian de St. Pedro have served this place and been buried here. "Remember those who have spoken the Word of God to you", is inscribed. And here, in this quiet church with its lists of missionary bishops, one looks down on to an altar at a lower level, resembling the tombs of Peter and Paul in St. Peter's at Rome. There according to an ancient and respectable tradition lies buried the martyred Apostle Thomas who here, in A.D. 68, "poured out his life for the Lord". Before the tomb were bunches of scarlet red kanna flowers, brightening the church with their colour of blood.

Recollection of the immemorial Christian past, two millennia, occupied my thoughts in the Archbishop's chapel there in Trivandrum, as the slow drama of the ritual unrolled itself,

in the *Qurbana*, the public celebration of Mass largely unchanged since the Third Century, the waving of the veil in invocation of the Holy Spirit, the shaking of the sistrum thrice and again thrice at the consecration, the unchanged Syriac words of consecration:

"And when the Sinless One was about to accept of His own will death for our sake, for the life and salvation of the world, in the night in which He was betrayed, He took bread in His holy and innocent and stainless hands and showed forth unto Thee, O God the Father, and gave thanks and blessed and sanctified and brake and gave to His disciples the Apostles, saying: Take ye, eat of this. This is My Body. Which is broken for you and for many and is given for the remission of sins and for eternal life." So the prayers went on, the *Pater Noster*, the communion, the *Ite Missa est* and the blessing, in the chapel up there with its Indian congregation and priests on the far Malabar shore amid the hills of Travancore beyond the southern sea. Long before Bede the Venerable translated the Gospels for his Northumbrian folk up in Jarrow or Gregory the Pope despatched his mission to the Angles or Patrick went back from Rome to Ireland, these prayers were being said in Malabar.

This background, this memory of the long Christian tradition in India, coloured my thoughts also as I sat on the piazza of the archbishop's house, on one of the hills that overlook the country of Travancore around Trivandrum, with seated opposite to me the old man in his white robe edged with violet, his crimson sash and his beard of a patriarch, he talking of his work and I telling him of my journey to Rome. It was interesting to reflect that his Christianity was almost certainly older in Travancore than Hinduism. The Aryans with their Brahmins had not penetrated, Indians tell me, into these Dravidian districts in the First Century. The only Christianity that can play a great role in India is his kind, accepted, acclimatized, nay more, indigenous, able to meet Hinduism on its own ground, as Hinduism met Buddhism and defeated it. How far the vital spirit still dwells in the Christian communities among these hills of Travancore is a matter of no little concern and significance for the future of Christianity itself in the Orient, the place of its origin.

## CHAPTER XIII

MY INDEFATIGABLE guide, the archivist, has decided to take me on an expedition out to a monastery high upon a wooded peak. It is a Hindu monastery, maintained by one of the latest of Hindu sects or cults. Since its object was and is to embrace more completely all religions within the synthetic toleration of Hinduism, perhaps "sect" (although its numbers are not great) is the wrong word. I was to see more of this cult in Bengal from which it sprang, with its *saddhus* and *swamis*, holy men and teachers.

A century ago an ascetic and holy man, simple and illiterate but with the gift of wisdom in his sayings, lived on the banks of the Hooghly River above Calcutta. His name was Ramakrishna and he found, among his devoted followers, an organizer and apostle, a St. Paul, in a young man, one Vivekananda—his original name was Ghosh—who had a gift of fervour, a strong sense of mission and the ability to convince others, not only in India but also in America, about his mission. To him Gandhi referred at Kottayam. The keynote of his gospel was that religion is one. But when one sought what might be in turn the keynotes of this one religion, one found, not only the injunction to join with meditation social activity, but also to join to love a certain belief in the righteousness of vitality and power, and indeed of Indian vitality and power. This positive teaching stirred the minds of young Indians who felt that their country and their religion had too long played a passive role. If there was something of à Kempis in Vivekananda there was also no little of Nietzsche. What he never lacked, as he taught and even hectored his beloved disciples, was the gift to attract followers and to attract attention.

In Trivandrum the cult maintains a school, where I found small children learning some kind of chant by rote, and (as its custom is) a dispensary for the sick. Here we met the *swami* to whom I had been promised an introduction, in the saffron

robes of a Hindu *devot*, not greatly different from those of a Buddhist priest.

Together, Swami Tapasyanta, Paduval and myself climbed by footpaths the steep hill. It must have been like the one not so far from here, described by Somerset Maugham in *Razor's Edge*. Meanwhile I meditated upon what I had come out to see as we pushed our way by short cuts through the high grass and over the soft red rock. Perhaps some other "Sri Ganesh" like the teaching monk in Maugham's story. . . .

The Swami Tapasyanta here was a man of obvious integrity, who had renounced some more ambitious career as a lawyer or professional man to live, on very small means, in part managing a dispensary for the sick and developing the social work of his mission, in part in meditation. One Indian's comment to me had been: "They are lazy, with their times spent in meditation." This remark was a reaction against the notorious Indian preoccupation with yoga and introspection, but was scarcely justified in the case of this mission. Vivekananda, like Tilak later, put a stress on action.

Let us admit that the Indian Vedantist belief that, if one can discover one's true self, one discovers it to be identical with the spirit of all being, to be a god, is a dangerous belief, encouraging vanity and spiritual arrogance. The creature and the Creator become one. True, every animal, every stone, also becomes one with God. It is a theme that lends itself to parodies which have not been lacking. "One is the batsman and the bat"—a statement strictly true in the eyes of a physicist, although the arrangement of energy, electrons and molecules may be slightly different in the two cases. But it appeals to many, as one suspects it appealed to Vivekananda's hearers, precisely because, Nietzsche-wise, it taught them that they might be, and indeed were, super-men, men like gods. It gave a vain and dangerous sense of power. What should one do with folk who seriously thought that by introspection they recognized themselves as gods? Before I left India I was to see many signs of this aberration.

And yet this man who walked beside me was very far from being vain or arrogant. He had the mood of the Quaker, the mood of Aldous Huxley's "detached man". Nor did he seem to me at all lazy. And I could not help but feel that there was

a connection between his detachment and his way of life. It was the value of these ways of life that I had come out to seek.

At the top we found the monastery, a simple, one-storey building, with a wide and beautiful view from its roof of the valleys below, tree carpeted. It occupied, I noted, a sister hill to that on which the Catholic Jacobite archbishop, Mar Ivanios, proposed to establish his seminary.

When we reached the entrance hall a prisoner, a thief, was being taken in by three police and I enquired the reason. The monks, it appeared, knew well most of the characters in the neighbourhood, knew their family and background. They acted as intermediaries, peace-makers, arbiters. And the police when they wished to learn about a man or to settle out of court a difficult case not infrequently used the monks' services.

The impression of the valleys spreading below, and the Indian Ocean beyond with a slight haze over towards it, was one of peace. I knew well that in these valleys there was no little anxiety, strife, poverty to which the thief here bore witness. But the appearance of peace was also related to a reality, as smoke to flame and mirror image to object, as much as the strife and passion of quarrelling were transient events actual in time and so far real. To the power of this peace the monks also bore witness. As Somerset Maugham truly says: "It is a mistake to think that those holy men of India lead useless lives. They are a shining light in the darkness." Such is the light of the *sannyasins*.

The impression left on me was good. It was a house of quiet. Nor was I entirely disconcerted, knowing Indian habits, when I was asked to take off my shoes as I crossed over the floor of the shrine of Ramakrishna, whom his followers assert to be no more than a great *saddhu*, a good man, but to whom they already pay religious honours. In India indeed the man so easily becomes the god. I was much more disconcerted to find outside pictures of Vivekananda and Christ, put there together to indicate the wide tolerance of the cult. Since I had not yet reached a judgement on Vivekananda who, although possessed of great gifts, seemed to me a self-indulgent man who talked about what others might do, without much sacrifice to his own credit, a spectacular populariser who had been a great success

as a lecturer in America—since I had not reached a judgement, I resisted having it forced upon me by being so told that in the new synthetic religion Christ almost came to the level of Vivekananda and Ramakrishna.

And yet I did not doubt it to be true that at heart and core all religion was one, expressed different facets (but not perhaps equally significant facets) of one truth. One element of this truth was the value of integrity. The yellow-robed monk by me had integrity. . . . Did he not owe it to his religion?



## CHAPTER XIV

NEAR MADRAS is the old French colonial township of Pondicherry. If one hears French spoken in a Madras hotel the probability is that the speakers are Pondicherry inhabitants on an outing in the metropolis of Southern India, the city of distinctive dresses where men wear stoles, *angostharam*, like priests. In Pondicherry an *ashram* or community has been established by Sri Aurobindo, a teacher known throughout India. Sri Aurobindo is European educated, a man who mixed in outstanding British literary circles, counting such men as Lawrence Binyon among his friends, and who made his debut in India as a keen politician and advanced revolutionary. Indeed he migrated to Pondicherry because he believed that the British police were in pursuit of him because of some alleged connection with terrorism in Bengal in the days of Lord Hardinge.

In Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo renounced politics and adopted the even more distinctively Indian role of a recluse, a man dedicated to meditation. An able French lady came to manage his household. I have seen mural paintings in public places in India where he is put alongside Tagore as one of the master minds of present day India.

Competent scholars had told me that—among the many dozens of commentaries written upon the *Bhagavad-Gita* as Europeans used to write commentaries on the Bible—Sri Aurobindo's is one of the best. When I came to India I carried notes of introduction to him which I presented.

In due course I received a reply from his secretary. "You perhaps have heard about Sri Aurobindo, our great Master, who lives here. He sees people only four times in the year. The next occasion falls on the 24th April. I wonder if you want to see him. In case you do want to see him I must explain what is meant by 'seeing' him. I do not mean one could 'meet' him or talk to him—for he does not meet people—but one has a sight of him and receives his *silent* blessing. It is regarded by

Indians as a unique opportunity. . . . In case one wants to have what is called in the Indian language his *Darshan* one has to take permission as the *Darshan* is not open to the general public . . . Dr. Indra Sen is now in Delhi for the Asiatic Conference. I am asking him to meet you . . .”

It left me with very mixed feelings. It was true that I could not have been in Pondicherry anyhow on the date mentioned because I had to be in China by then. But, had I been free, what would I have done? Somewhere in me I felt that it ought *not* to be felt by Indians as a unique opportunity—that there was something derogatory to all humanity that one man should select himself to be beyond speech with his fellows. I was aware that, in Hindu opinion, it is not necessary that a holy man should, as the Buddha taught, actively seek to save souls, preferring (in the words of the Buddha) to undergo innumerable reincarnations rather than that some should be left unsaved. It is sufficient, according to Hinduism, that he should himself attain to this position of a saint. In the cycle of inevitable consequences and in the chain of causes, this fact alone manifests the powers of man and improves the life of the world. Indeed this cultivation of powers by oneself in the case of gifted men may open up a new stage of evolution, advancing humanity by their example, just as common men to-day have a memory, intelligence, articulate speech which the apes have not, as well as power to put little finger over against thumb which other animals than the primates have not.

I could see no reason why a recluse should not live by rule as a recluse, just as a scholar might be expected to live, differently, in the interchange of thought with scholars. What I found difficult was this assumption of an exclusive sainthood by those still living—if not made by the saint himself, then by his devoted followers; and this in a country where the saint is the living manifestation that man himself is not other than god, his self or *atman* being one with the all-pervading Divine Self. I could not, I felt, share this belief in the right to claim unapproachability and not to suffer others to come near. It would therefore be fraudulent, or an idle sightseeing, to go and share in the blessing at the *darshan* or “manifestation” of the saint. Perhaps what was wrong with India was too many darshans of god-men. Nor could I have made my obeisances

in any proper spirit to the French lady who is called the Holy Mother.

Accordingly I wrote this reply. "I thank you for your letter and for the opportunity of meeting Professor Sen. I deeply appreciate Sri Aurobindo's work as a scholar. I obtained one copy of his *Heracitus* and endeavoured to obtain others to present them to my friends, but failed. I should indeed have welcomed the opportunity of conversation with him on these important issues of scholarship. Alas! my time before I have to speak in Peking has been limited by my need to take days to visit Mahatma Gandhi whom I came to India to see. I leave for China on the 17th. This apart, I had hesitation in taking up the time of that great and humble man, the Sovereign Pontiff, who received me in private audience last year. And I should no less hesitate to take up the time of Sri Aurobindo, knowing how preoccupied he is as is the Successor of Peter."

Some of my Indian friends told me that I had written rightly. Others, such as the daughter of the famous poetess, Mrs. Naidu, told me that I should have said more. I wondered whether, in view of Sri Aurobindo's great distinction I had not already said too much. Some, I was told, had joined the *ashram* and were prevented by pride and unwillingness to confess failure from openly admitting that they had chosen wrongly. The wealthy were besought to come to its aid and sustain it.

I was not, however, concerned with the tone of the more unkind and less charitable critics. I was in no position to know whether they were right or wrong; and only Indians were really entitled to express a view. What interested me was the approach to life of the *ashram* which, whether genuine or an aberration of a very Indian character, was either way something beyond measurement different from that of the modern European. I came to feel that, although I could not anyhow have been present, I yet had answered superficially and wrongly; that had I gone, if not then, yet later, I might have learned something as touching the way of salvation by the route (the old Platonic and Neo-Platonic route) of knowledge, the *jnana-yoga*, as distinct from the route of devotion, *bhakti-yoga*.

It was not merely a matter of the Westerner being an extrovert, busy with bustling activities, whereas the Indian—I will not say the Eastern, for the Chinese are so different again

—is concerned with the cultivation of the interior life. Sri Aurobindo says all this in his *Basis of Yoga*, in the most beautiful language. He says it in that book *The Life Divine*, which so resembles in its title the book of the philosopher, Fichte, *The Blessed Life*. But the distinction is more profound.

I have known well and studied closely for many years the politics of the West, of Britain and America. I have known the politicians and they are men especially responsive to the mood of popular opinion. That is their *métier*. And I am confident that any Western politician who adopted this Eastern technique would not merely fail—he would not be permitted by his electors to reach the first stages of a political career. In so far as the Western man approves of the cultivation of the self, it is quite a different kind of self that he would wish to cultivate. He would wish to learn, not yoga, but how to make friends and influence people.

It is not that he is more gregarious. This is unproven. India is at least as susceptible to mass movements and to communal opinions as the West. But Eastern training in self-cultivation begins with an aristocratic assumption—that one should discard, as a first step, most of that ordinary self which the ordinary man is very content to retain; that one should seek to cease to be average, not to learn how to co-operate better with the average; that one should cultivate rare gifts which, if ever used, will identify one more closely, not with the human work-a-day mass, but with the reality behind the veil of commonplace events which only the specially trained man, the spiritual athlete, can climb high enough to see clearly. This Indian thought asks us to become *different* from the others, spiritual Brahmins.

There is an unsolved problem in Hinduism itself. On the one hand, it is monistic, so concerned to preach that all is one that the very distinctions of right and wrong fall into the primal abyss of that which is beyond good and evil. In accordance with this line of thought, appearance itself, so far as it “exists”—*is*—has a transient reality, is real; and we do well to study the human arts of how to conduct ourselves in such a world. In some measure even the (to Western eyes) obscene worship of Vishvanath, the Primal Energy, is a recognition of this, for this Primal Energy sustains the apparent.

On the other hand, the Vedanta and the philosopher Sankara, who has so much in common with the great Buddhist deviation or "heresy", stress the reality *behind* appearance, the distinction between the self, the *Purusha*, which can be unified with the Divine Self, and *Prakriti*, the world of practice and action. By Yoga and meditation we turn *away* from *Prakriti*, and become calm like the Buddha and detached. Perhaps ultimately, like a Stoic and a Neoplatonist, the Yogi saint loses that sympathy with the world's pain which the Christian Cross proclaims. Perhaps cure is better than sympathy, and the Yogi is a self-announced expert of the soul. But the Yogi, gaining a new touch, loses and is taught to lose the common touch, the *bonhomie* of middling men. Yogi and Commissar have at least this in common that they are ruling men, leaders, by profession. It is just Western democracy which is so contrary in mood to this technique of special training in *ashrams*, and of *darshans* of especially rare saints. Nevertheless, during long epochs of its civilization, the West itself would have accepted Sri Aurobindo's outlook, this outlook of priest and monk, of philosopher and elect.

The utterances here of the Mahatma preserve an interesting balance. On the one hand he writes, in *From Yeravda Mandir*: "Inborn humility can never remain hidden, and yet the possessor is unaware of its existence. Humility should make the possessor *realize* that he is nothing. And a man who is proud of his virtue often becomes a curse to society. Inertia must not be mistaken for humility, as it has been in Hinduism. True humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed to the service of humanity".

On the other hand, M. K. Gandhi writes in *Hind Swaraj*: "It is a superstition and an ungodly theory to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong and those of minorities to have been right. All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities". And then, in words so reminiscent of St. Augustine, he continues: "If among a band of robbers a knowledge of robbery is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation?" The duty to be humble, the obligation to be democratic, is a duty to respect not only the rights but the inspiration of a few,

to be taught by the more educated in truth, the more gifted in insight, the *guru* or the teacher.

Francis Xavier would have understood Aurobindo better than Western man can to-day. Who will say which was the author of the sentence: "If you feel, whenever you meditate, the quiescence and the flashes of the inner Light and, if the inward urge is growing so strong that the external hold is decreasing and the vital disturbances are losing their force, that is already a great progress". St. Ignatius in *The Spiritual Exercises*—or for that matter, Baxter in *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*? Or Aurobindo? (Actually it is the last). And yet it is quite certain that the West does not trust this aristocratic philosophy. It is the popular world: and it wishes to remain the world, taking things as it finds them and accepting the circular whirl of action without end.

Is this restless activism the wisdom of the West, or one cause of its obvious *malaise*? How can Faust return to the Apollonian calm, the classic calm, the lotus? Or is Faustian man condemned to be for ever Dionysiac—in brief, restlessly to worship Vishvanath, the Primal Energy? Is it *the West* that holds the real worshippers of the *lingam*, as the worshippers of Dionysius were of old? This is the problem.

## CHAPTER XV

THE LONG journey North has been completed across the torrid expanse of India, which from the air looks like a spreadout lion skin. From the train, more prosaically, the view for endless dusty miles is of sandy earth, lightly sown with pease or used as sparse pasturage by the gaunt Indian water buffalo and by the harbinger of Indian civilization, the Indian cow.

I have been invited to visit, from Delhi, the state of Jaipur as the guest of its well-known sporting Maharaja. In order to reach Jaipur city before lunch and the peak heat of midday, it is necessary to start by car about half-past five in the morning, only stopping on the two hundred mile run at the rest house at Alwar.

We take the road westwards out of Delhi and before long are crossing the dreary expanse of the northern Punjab. The villages are of the kind usual in this area, mud structures compared with which an Irish peasant's cabin is a palace. The fuel for the village, large blocks of cow dung patted into shape, is stacked in piles as large as the huts. The women of the village walk around with their precious cow dung, collecting more. It is a great item in the Indian economy. More romantically they gather at the well-head, pulling up the pitchers of water and filling large jugs of red earthenware and vessels of brass. Here is a routine existence so hard that it soon wears out, in these peasant women, such beauty as the human frame possesses. The Mahatma rightly insists that the life of India is the life of the village. But what joys it has I am not competent to say. Occasionally these women wear Rajput dress, with bright trousers fitting closely to the calves—a dress which, despite its gaiety of colour, is to Western eyes singularly unkind to the female form. Usually they wear the petticoat, with or without a bodice, and the sari, sometimes gay, too often bedraggled. The lower breast often remains exposed. Most villages in this part seemed to have a mosque. On the whole the standard of living of the Moslems is lower, at least no higher, than that of

the Hindus, although in some quarters they are alleged to leave a better impression of morale.

It may be an illusion but, when we left the Punjab and entered Alwar, it seemed to me that the cultivation improved. Pease was planted, on either side of the road, in regular lines. If we had on several occasions to turn aside from the road and drive over the earth and over the dry beds of watercourses, it was because the roads themselves, on which one could drive at seventy miles an hour, were under repair.

Alwar itself is a small Eastern city in whose narrow streets a car easily becomes jammed in the crowded traffic. Two lines of traffic, even if in order, could with difficulty pass between the open shop fronts, innocent of glass but full of wares, on either side. Almost the car brushed the feet of the shopkeepers as they sat, cross legged in their stores with most of their goods within arm's length as they had done since the days when the Caliph Haroun al Raschid still ruled in Baghdad. The railway station of Alwar is clearly divided into two portions, one a practical affair for common folk and one a reception hall built for when the prince arrived and left. However the State guest house was pleasantly run and provided my driver and myself with cool drinks, flavoured with sweet essence of rose petal scents, and the opportunity to eat our sandwich meal before we proceeded on our journey. Later I was to discover that Alwar was a hatching-ground of Indian chauvinist conspiracy, of the Hindu Sangh or association for Hindu domination on a semi-fascist model.

During the last fifty miles we are within the territory of Jaipur. At Thanagazi and Shahpura large mediæval Indian castles command the road, as another does the hill pass beyond. The first warning of approach, however, to Jaipur itself is the view on opposite hill tops, like robber barons' castles on the Rhine, of two keeps facing each other. At last we reach a considerable town, Amber, and turn in through a castellated gate which breaks the line of a massive wall with battlements, a wall spanning the entire valley, barring approach. This is the ancient city and above it on the hill side, above a lake formed in the rocky valley with its steep declivity, is the old Palace. It rises level tier above level tier of mediæval Indian architecture, yellow red in the morning sun, a veritable



Palace of the Sun with at one end a large and famous Hindu temple, approached by a causeway between the gigantic wall and the still lake. We have indeed reached the land of the rose-red cities as old as time itself.

However, the Maharajas of Jaipur have left for two centuries this citadel of the forefathers, in favour of the New City which is reached in the plain beyond the pass—reached rather as one reaches from the deserts and mountains east of Utah the promised land and fairy expanse of pleasant verdure between Provo and Salt Lake City, or as one might take the descent by zig-zag roads from Cuzco of the Incas.

The eye of the traveller is greeted by a kind of miracle—not an Oriental city but a well-planned town, with colonnades of pillars in red-painted stucco under a tropic sun. The streets are wider than many a London street and run in neat rectangles. Public buildings raise their tidy towers. Beyond is a large hospital and here again is a dairy research institute. Far away are the threatening grandcurs of the palace among the red mountains. Here one might be in some Bath transported, Pump Room and all, into India.

The amazed enquirer learns that all this was planned in 1739 when Washington was not yet built and London a squalid town. Its designer was a French pioneer architect who visited India in those far off days of Dupleix and the French Eastern empire. Its creator was the then Maharaja. The word "Enlightenment" is almost written across the buildings of this Indian Joseph II. Typically enough the State, pre-Socialist and more than Socialist, owns all these buildings and dictates their external arrangement and decoration. The internal decoration is left to the tenant, subject to inspection. When one says that "the State owns" this means in effect that the Maharaja owns.

That afternoon of my arrival I met the Maharaja, whose name is famous throughout the polo world as "Jai". The following day he was leaving for Karachi to catch a plane to London. Later on I was to meet him there and his Maharani, who is so famed for her beauty. And since it was also the birthday of the Maharani the hours were characterized by a round of festivities where the Maharaja moved from one private party to another of his officials and subjects who were

gathered to give him a send-off. The cocktail parties were entirely in Western manner and nothing could have been more informal than the Maharaja's demeanour.

He appeared in white trousers and a white silk sports vest with his initials embroidered on it. There was so little ceremony, as he joined the other guests, that anyone not well informed ahead of time might have imagined that merely another officer, smart among other smartly groomed men, had joined the group. At the mention of his favourite sports the handsome, self-confident face lit up with interest. Politics was not an issue in which, on a birthday party and in the midst of packing for Europe, he could be expected to display interest. The atmosphere was the exotic one of the *Train Bleu* or the Rome Express, Riviera-bound—except that the Maharaja had found a more swift, dangerous and sportsmanlike means of transport than even a crack train—a Pan-American Constellation, first stop Constantinople, flying from Karachi to London in one day, with tea in Claridges Hotel the same afternoon. So East and West were brought together and exquisitely mixed at this Western cocktail party in the rose city of Jaipur in the Rajputana desert and hills. I was lucky to find my host at the last available moment. It was typical of Indian hospitality that he should invite me even at a time so inconvenient to himself. That was a princely interpretation of *noblesse oblige*. He and Aurobindo were both aristocrats, but of a different kind.

The following day my arrangements compelled me to return, apart from considerations of courtesy. Although I had slept well, despite the great heat, I was distressed to learn that my chauffeur had had to sleep in the garden behind the flower beds, amid the mosquitoes. In India, if a man objects to his treatment even by his compatriots, he is liable to be told to "go to the jungle". With this hiatus in consideration, doubtless the fault of some careless underling, fresh in my mind I could not help but note, as we took the car back to Delhi, the number of princely palaces we passed, some in large part empty, but built by state funds from taxes and still costing taxes to maintain. Enlightenment in Jaipur has sometimes characterized the grandeur of its Maharajas; but sometimes only the grandeur is in evidence.

A few hours' drive and we were back in Alwar and then the Punjab. I had left behind the great palace overlooking the cleft in the hills, with its temple, its lake, its assured beauty which must attract any romantically minded visitor, the tiger beauty of confident power, and its sinister suggestion of indifference to all but itself and the holding of that pass in the mountains.

## CHAPTER XVI

I CAME down from Simla by car, running over a python or some equally lengthy snake on the road down through the Himalayan foot-hills. At Ambala I got a sleeping compartment in the Punjab Mail, coming from Rawalpindi; changed trains at Delhi; and got out at Dholpur. I had been invited to stay with the Maharaja of that state.

The Maharaja here, warned of my arrival by my very remarkable friend, Professor J. B. Raju, had sent personal attendants of his household, magnificently dressed men in turbans, to meet me. His car carried me through the streets of a neatly laid out town—not a common Indian characteristic—to the palace.

There I was greeted on the steps by various court officials, by the bearded Maharaja of Nabwa, the son-in-law of my host, and by my host himself, a slim man with a sensitive, intelligent face, dressed in close fitting white surcoat stretching to below the knees, and wearing a turban the green-blue colour of pistachio. The first thing that impressed me was the extreme courtesy of his manners. The atmosphere immediately gave me the feeling of being that of some princely court of the Eighteenth Century, except that these manners were better and more precise than they must often have been in the small German courts.

After tea—itsself a compliment to the visitor, and served from beautiful silver jugs and tea-pots—the suggestion was made that I might care to go out for a short run. Although I was, without being tired, yet not unaware that I had made an all-night journey, I accepted this as the obvious thing to do, even if without enthusiasm. We made up a party of four, the two maharajas the driver and myself. I little expected what was to come.

As we went down the road towards the open scrub country—big game country I was told—bystanders saluted. Not only small fowl but peacocks, with their glorious tails wide spread,

were to be seen in such abundance as I had never imagined. After a while, clearly by pre-arrangement, the car stopped, two soldiers stepped forward and a warden, who loaded into the car gourds shaped like cucumbers. I gathered that this was the Maharaja's evening routine.

Meanwhile His Highness discoursed with me on the laws of the jungle. No kill is made by a tiger before nightfall. He gives warning of his presence: if after this a deer chooses to stray from the herd, outside range of warning by the sentinel animals, it is a fair kill. The deer themselves will show complete trust if they are treated with consistent kindness. Were men as easy to handle and rule as animals, the world, the Maharaja observed, would be an easier place.

Opposite an old red Hindu temple, deserted except at festival seasons, he turned off the main road until we reached a herd of deer. Far from scampering away, our arrival was clearly expected. The deer surrounded us on all sides, even knocking with their horns lightly against the back of the car. Some were called by name and the well-behaved rewarded with gourds to eat. This love-feast continued for many minutes until we moved on to regain the road.

A little further and a man came running out, and whispered something to his prince. The Maharaja of Dholpur turned and asked me whether I would like to see a tiger. I said that I certainly would. We were then near a low structure, a royal hunting lodge, beside a small lake amid the red Rajputana hills. We walked in silence, climbed the stair of the lodge and, when on the roof, field-glasses were handed to us.

White-chested, red-brown, there amid the high grass comfortably asleep after drinking from the lake, lay our tiger. With the aid of the field-glasses there was no difficulty at all in detecting him. Having taken our fill of looking at him, we returned to our car, found another herd of deer not four hundred yards from him, but apparently unperturbed, and fed them; and then continued to the end of our run. We returned to see the sun sinking brass yellow and pale, as it so often does in India, amid a dun-coloured haze of dust. As we passed their place our herd of deer had moved. The tiger had also moved. We returned to Dholpur in time to see the twinkle of oil lamps coming out in the shops and houses.

After a formal dinner, served by liveried attendants, at which the diwan and other ministers were present, as well as Raju, we sat down for a talk which lasted until almost midnight in which I got the benefit of the Maharaja's wisdom and views about the duties of a prince. He is a Rajput, not a Maratha, and his line traces back far beyond any European crowned head. It is almost as ancient as that of the Mikado of Japan. His predecessors have been princes and rulers for a clear two thousand years. Perhaps only the Rajput princes can make such a claim, they and the occupant of the Chrysanthemum Throne.

He explained to me his views on politics, his debt to the late Duke of Connaught and personal allegiance to the British Crown, and his conception of the duties of a prince. According to Hindu religion Krishna had had many incarnations and those not only in human form, but as the noblest of trees and of animals. He was the tiger among animals and the prince among men. Here was the exemplar. Every prince had an obligation to display in his person to the best of his abilities the qualities of Krishna. As he spoke my mind recalled that Luther had said that a prince must display the qualities of David; that the Byzantine emperors had claimed to be a human image of the Most High Majesty; and that James I of England has expounded in his *Basilikon Doron*, on the same basis, the divine right of Kings.<sup>1</sup>

The world, the Maharaja continued, when well ordered was a world in which each man had his proper quality and performed his proper function. I had had the same theory expounded to me in Travancore. Fundamentally it was the philosophy of caste, if not of hereditary caste. Many Indian minds thought this organic functionalism, which is as old as anything in political thought, to be more profound and more moral than any theory or practice of the West. I did not. For one thing, it tended to deny (as, for that matter, all Hinduism tended to deny) the intrinsic value of the individual soul, its spiritual potentiality as distinct from its actual social lot and station with that station's duties. Not lacking in mysticism, it yet lacked recognition of the individual relation between the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. K.M. Panikkar: *The Origin and Evolution of Kingship in India*. Baroda State Press.

individual soul or *atman* and God. And yet there was contradiction. For Hinduism did not fail to insist that each *atman* could also be—was in reality—a Krishna. But perhaps (and this was the core of Hinduism) it was this only after reincarnation in every caste up to the highest. The Himalaya height of unity was not to be scaled at one step.

The Maharaja continued, almost in the words of the Seventeenth Century *Patriarcha* of Sir Robert Filmer. I had never expected to hear with my living ears this old doctrine forcibly expounded to me with conviction. The prince, he said, was a father to his people. The whole Indian social system was founded upon the family. There was a duty specific to the prince as *pater patriae*, a *raja dharma*; and there was a duty specific to the subject. Order, justice and harmony came where each did his own duty. Here was authentic Hinduism, with its intense consciousness of the unity of each with his world.

My charming host, I had no particle of doubt, did his duty by his animals. And the Hindu is inclined to accept the Anti-Vivisection League slogan, "Until compassion is shown to animals, there can be no peace among men". I had no particle of doubt also that to those whom he found more disorderly and difficult to rule, his human subjects, he did his conscientious and paternal duty, certainly so long as they did their filial duty. I was sure that he modelled his daily conduct upon the caste duty preached to Arjuna by the Lord Krishna in the *Gita*. But I remained unconvinced that all princes were as religiously conscientious, as intelligent or as sensitive as this Rajput, ruler of immemorially antique lineage, His Highness the Maharaja of Dholpur. Nor was I sure that the duty of a citizen, still less of a man, was limited to a filial duty. But as I bowed my farewell to the slight neat figure wearing the blue-green turban, before I returned to Delhi, I felt not only respect but affection.

## CHAPTER XVII

I LEFT Delhi, to which I was to return, to move eastwards to revisit Calcutta. In Allahabad I went to talk to the grand old man of Indian Liberalism, Sir Tej Sapru, and to see the confluence of the Jumna and Ganges where the boatmen, each with his little tent or hut, and his totem flag, wait to take out would-be bathers in the sacred waters. Here is the Sangam, where takes place the annual fair.

Outside holy Benares is Sarnath, and to this I made my pilgrimage with my eminent archaeologist friend as guide. Four places are sacred above all in Buddhism, Lumbinidran in Nepal where Gautama the Buddha was born, a prince's son; Kasda where he died; Buddh-Gaya where he received illumination under the bo-tree; and Sarnath—"Saranganathia", in full, "the place of the lord of the deer"—where first he preached the Eightfold Way and set rolling the Wheel of Life. Here he came, after illumination, to rejoin disciples who had discarded him as a heathen man and a renegade because, fasting to death, he had broken the fast, accepted refreshment from the hands of a girl, and then had turned himself from bodily fasting, and turned against bodily fasting, to that spiritual fast which ended in illumination.

The disciples, as they saw him coming to Sarnath, to the park of the deer, plotted against him. But when they saw the illumination of his face they changed their hearts and bowed down and did him honour. And here recently one of my American colleagues, a philosopher of physics, had received illumination and had mounted "the Lesser Vehicle", accepting Buddhism in its Hinayana form, its more Puritan form.

This is the Eightfold Path of the Aryan Way. Right View. Right Aim. Right Speech. Right Action. Right Living. Right Effort. Right Mindfulness. Right Contemplation. What then is the Right View which those have who follow this Middle Path?



"This, brethren, is the Aryan Truth about Suffering. Birth is suffering. Decay is Suffering. Death is Suffering, likewise Sorrow and Grief, Woe, Lamentation and Despair. To be conjoined with things which we dislike, to be separated from things which we like—that also is Suffering. In a word, this Body, this fivefold Mass which is based on Grasping, that is Suffering."

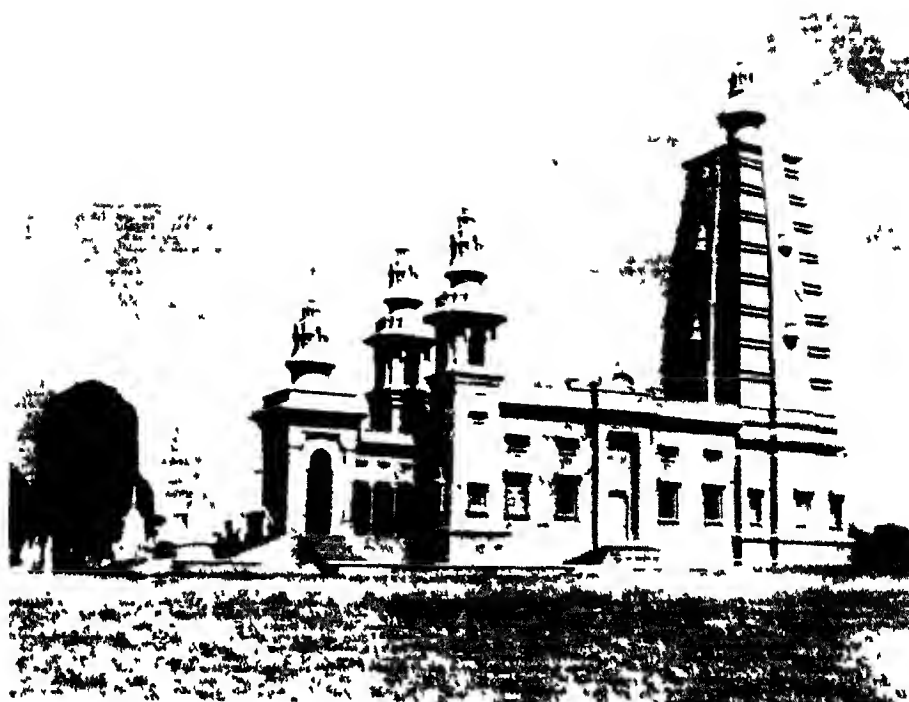
The origin of suffering is craving. The ceasing of suffering, "verily it is the utter passionless cessation of, the giving up, the forsaking, the release from, the absence of longing for, this craving".

As I paced the sward of Sarnath, with its ruins, with its little votive stupas, with its pillar of Asoka the King, with its grand stupa, the height of a four-floor house, I saw the place where the Buddha had first preached these things in Sarnath.

It was not the modern Indian temple, in so large part built from European subscriptions, it was not the modern Chinese temple with its corrugated iron roof, so unworthy of comparison with the awe-inspiring temples in Hangchow, that impressed me. This was a place of no images until the first century B.C. for it was the Greek influence that brought the images. Still less was it the museum of relics for archaeologists that occupied my mind. It was the memory of the Buddha himself. And my concern was to value for myself the value of the teaching.

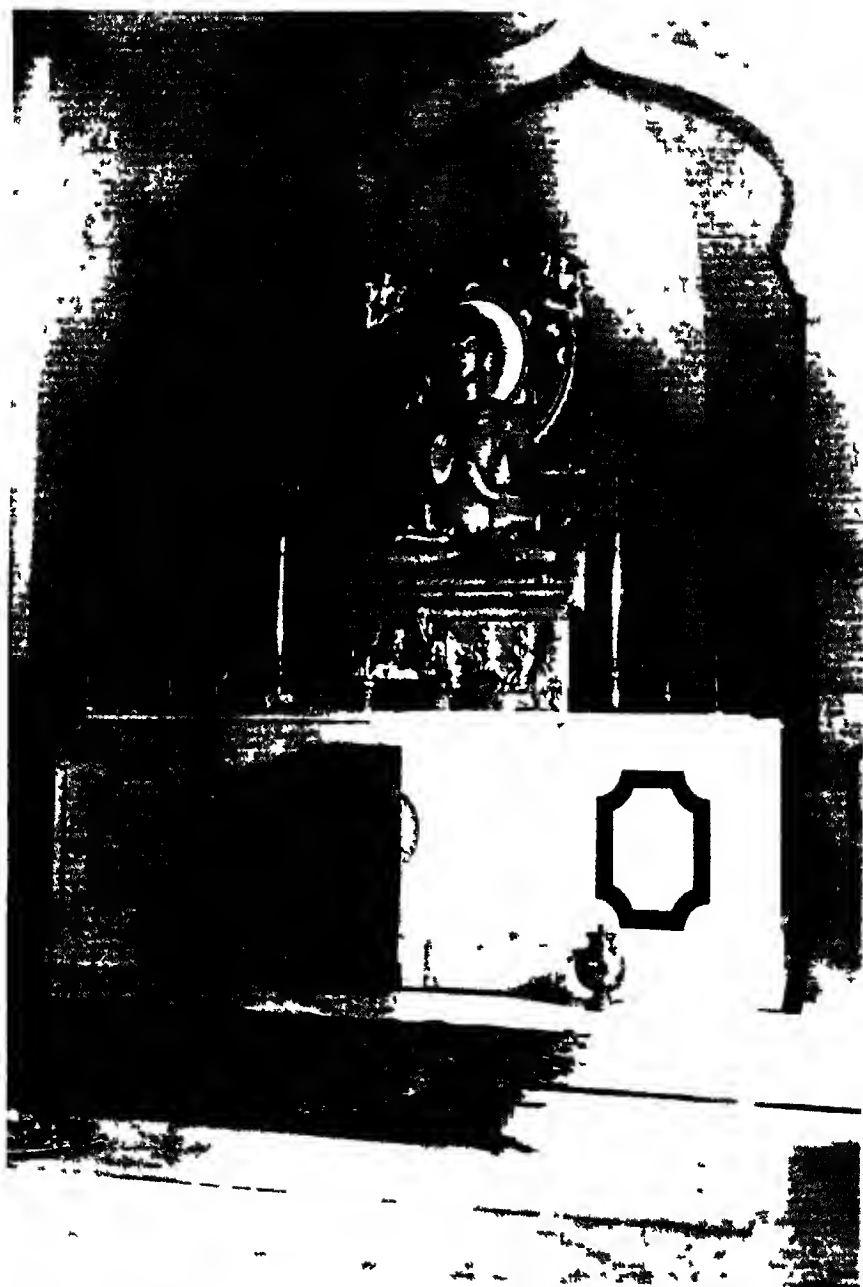
The Buddha had said that, after his death, nothing at all of him would be left behind in earth. And in connection with this I heard of a strange happening at Sarnath. It is true that the pious Ceylonese have preserved relics, some perhaps genuine and some fictitious, and that some portions of these have again been enshrined in the Indian modern temple. They were placed there "in the year nineteen thirty and two of the era of Christ". Nearby also is a tree, a cutting from Ceylon itself, cut from the Gaya bo-tree. But the major relic, as it may well have been, of Sarnath has gone.

Towards the close of the Eighteenth Century, in 1793, the local raja, a Hindu, Babu Jagat Singh, designed to improve his market halls in Benares and, after the fashion of vandals the world over, sought to save himself the trouble of quarrying by rifling the ruins of Sarnath for convenient rubble. Among other things he demolished one of the grand stupas. The



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India]*

Sarnath The Mulagandha Kuti Vihara Temple



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India*

Sarnath. Buddha's Image inside the Kuti Vihara Temple

greatest of the existing ones is a votive stupa, with no central shrine. But the case was different with the stupa which the raja despoiled.

At its core was found a stone sarcophagus and in it a casket of silver. The first of these has been preserved. But within this again was a casket of gold. His interest awakened by the find, the raja took possession of the caskets and the one of gold he presented to the then British Resident in Benares, one Mr. Jonathan Duncan, a man sufficiently intelligent and concerned with archaeology to write a paper on the find in a learned archaeological journal of the day.

Mr. Duncan argued that this casket, which contained, within the gold cover, jewels and bones, must have held the earthly remains of some very great saint indeed, and that if this saint had been a Hindu his disciples would certainly have consigned the remains to the sacred Ganges. The remains, then, must be those of a Buddhist saint and indeed, from their position, those of the Buddha himself.

Now this golden casket and these remains have entirely disappeared without trace, and no one can suggest their location. Could an archaeologist have melted down a priceless casket for gold bullion, which he must have been sure was of less price than the casket itself? Did Buddhist disciples steal the holy relic away, more precious than all that Tibet possesses? Or did Mr. Duncan carry it back, concealed, to his native Scotland where it is perhaps to be found, hidden under other things, in the parlour of some Scottish manse? No one knows. Oddly no one in Benares seemed greatly interested in this Mystery of the Lost Golden Casket which contained the bones of the Lord Buddha. My friends were content with the over-simple explanation that gold bullion has its attraction for thieves. But there is no record of the theft.

## CHAPTER XVIII

TO SARNATH in the full moon of July, in the first year of the sixth century before Christ, came the Buddha—as the tradition records, about seven o'clock in the evening, walking from Benares. There he taught the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path. And there he taught his disciples to seek neither *guru*, miracle or god, but to “be your own salvation”. To doubt the permanence of the soul and the utility of sacrifices, however contrary to popular religion, was not for Hindus heresy in the Buddha's day, for many passages in the Upanishads indicate the same doctrine. The soul of each individual pilgrim and religious might seek and obtain salvation, without social aid of works, sacrifice or sacrament, without social limit of station, whether as prince or peasant. Even the devas, the gods, even Krishna, would need the salvation of the great release. It was a highly individual, non-caste, negative doctrine—coupled even in the Buddha's day with much preaching of the Method, and of the Church as guardian of the Method.

To the Hindus Gautama is only one other Hindu reformer, such as the philosopher Sankara of old or, for that matter, Mahatma Gandhi to-day. Later Sankara (Eighth Century, A.D.) was to preach, as orthodox, a doctrine so similar to Mahayana Buddhism, that Buddhism itself in India was first weakened and, then, finally swallowed up, less resistant than Indian Christianity. The Buddha did not claim deity and his immediate disciples certainly rendered no such honour. Learned scholars dispute whether the Nirvana to which by salvation man can return without the aid of any gods is total nothingness; or whether, as later scholars maintain, this Hinayana doctrine is a misinterpretation, not primitive—a perverse deviation. If so, then the Mahayana, “the Greater Vehicle”, very nearly represents that Indian tradition of Maya and of Brahm of which the Buddha (like Sankara, the Vedantist, whose doctrine is so similar) is the fruit and by which the Buddha was shaped. Indeed far from preaching,

they say, a return to nothingness, the Buddha distinguished himself among Hindu holy men by refusing to seclude himself and by going out into the world to preach, with active benevolence, the road of salvation, to all, even to the outcasts, unhappy until he had displayed it to all.

In China, on the other hand, non-Buddhists say that the teachings of the Buddha turned the culture of the great Chinese people from its natural bent, from its earthy common-sense; and filled Chinese heads with fantastic and unhealthy visions, much too Indian, of other-worldly salvation.

It may be that the Buddha, like the Stoics later, preached to all who had ears to hear a gospel of salvation for all without distinction of caste or social limits of race or country or civic obligation or family tie. It may be that this gospel preached to the individual, as a gospel of grace without caste-works of the law, differed otherwise little from Hinduism, and that the Real with which unity was sought was the undifferentiated one that is source of all life, the Brahm, the Nameless, the *nirvana* of fullness. He who recites Om, or Ram, or *Pater Noster*, feels the presence. So the lamas to-day obscurely teach in Tibet and in China. Or it may be otherwise, and that the Buddha, not too unlike certain modern philosophers, held the self, eternally estranged from reality—an illusion which, the more it plunged into itself, knew itself to be illusion, illusory freedom—and the appetites and graspings of the self, which disturb peace of mind, to be snares set by ignorance. But whereas these philosophers of Existence find salvation from emptiness and futility in “the Act”, the Buddha found salvation from futile activity in “the Renunciation of Act” and of strivings.

Among the ruins of Sarnath, whose temples were described amply by the Chinese traveller even of the Seventh Century and whose temples were destroyed by the vandal, fanatic Moslem invaders of the Twelfth, I tried to reason matters out.

Many have done so before, engaging in dispute on this and that. The evidence was before me. The ancient engraved pillar of the Emperor Asoka here carries an inscription. “Asoka, beloved of the gods, decrees.” He decrees that “stirrers of schism among the brethren shall be turned out of their monasteries and shall cease to wear the saffron robe”. A little beyond this another and later inscription records that

this very place is now legally possessed by a sect to the exclusion of the rest: "the sammitija sect possesses". No royal ordinance could prevent the warfare of ideas, the warring sects of philosophy. Or may be they only quarrelled about property and had the appetite to possess. . . .

I knew that I did not agree with the Hindu worship of the cow, which only the history of Indian civilization explained. This might indicate the unity of all things but forgot the different value of each thing. To respect life was itself a value; but only one value among many, and to be judged, as such, among the rest. Buddha also did not worship the cow. But he taught the unity of living things that was the reasonable source of the belief. But the unity was for him no final truth. Not every sense of unity brought emancipation from the chain of events, brought tranquillity.

To the Buddha, the Great Rejecter, the worship of Vishvanath stood in polar opposition—no, not even the little brass statue in Travancore could gainsay that. As the picture in the new Buddhist temple shewed, the dancers of Maya as they sought to tempt him, grew old as they danced. He broke the bonds of caste because caste, with its social stations and its duties, was also Maya. He broke the bonds of becoming and of all transient things.

I also knew that I did not believe in the doctrine of the Hinayana or in Buddhism as the Hindus, the critics of Buddhism represented it, the negative Buddhism which preached the abnegation of life, the reaching of *nirvana* as the peace of the great void. This pessimist doctrine seemed to me, like the philosophy of the modern Existentialists, Heidegger and Sartre, most precisely a doctrine without a meaning, and incidentally an atheism without values. The atheistic Existentialists said: Live in the closed circle of an illusion but save your sanity by exploding from it by an act—into some new circle. The Buddhism of denial would say, so much more logically: Perceive the illusion, existence and essence alike illusion, phenomena and essence alike illusion. Why the weariness of acts? I suspected that the orthodox Hindus so represented Buddhism because so its fallacy might become clearer and easier to expose. Instead I turned to the sacred writ of Buddhism, the *Dhammapada*.

“Whatsoever is of nature to rise, all that is of nature to cease again . . . Impermanent, alas! are all compounded things. Their nature is to rise and fall. When they have risen they cease. The bringing of them to an end is bliss. . . . My good sir, even the Brahmā World is impermanent, not lasting, subject to personality. Well for you, dear sir, if you raise your mind above the Brahmā World and concentrate on cessation from the personal.”

All this would seem to confirm the idea of Buddha as the teacher of the Great Negation—pure Being and Not-Being are one, Becoming is sorrow. But soon we find that, like Confucius in China, the Buddha is not concerned with metaphysical speculation save so far as it bears on the conduct of life. “Now, Malunkyaputta,” we read on, “did I say to you, Come thou, Malunkyaputta, follow the holy life under me, and I will declare to you ‘Eternal is the world’ or ‘Not eternal is the world’, and so forth?” “Not so, Lord . . .” “But I am one who declares thus: Whether the world be eternal or not, nevertheless there is birth, there is decay, there is death, there are sorrow and grief, woe, lamentation and despair: and it is the destruction of these things that I do declare . . . That the world is eternal or otherwise—this thing is not concerned with profit: it is not a principle of the holy life.”



## CHAPTER XIX

TWO THOUSAND AND FIVE HUNDRED or more years ago Gautama the Buddha, the Enlightened One, came to Sarnath to begin in the Preaching of the Way—came to the place where I now stand. Nearly a quarter of the human race has proclaimed itself his followers. Perhaps the followers followed a corrupted doctrine. In China, away in Peking, I was told by scholars that he preached other-worldliness. What indeed did he preach?

I have not spent a life-time as a Buddhist scholar to answer that question. But as a pilgrim I can tell what has meaning to me and what corresponds with my experience in the words of the Buddha. And this may also have meaning to others. It is not the interpretation by identification with the absolute void, the great Un-Becoming, the reversal of the wheel.

The Lord of the Lotus. Did he give tranquillity? Or were the Hindus right? Was the Great Heresy too much of a rejection of all life and its loves, a pacifism of annihilation, a stilling of the wheels and of the waters? Was there nothing to be created, affirmed, fought for? Or, if to "fight for" a value were too Western a concept, then at least was there no value in life's many coloured variety and its observation? What views had indeed some Buddhists, Buddhists for example in Tibet, themselves held? My learned guide assured me that some of the underground cells might have been devoted, on the evidence, to tantric rites.

I read: "When one reaches up to the Release, called the Beautiful, and having reached it abides therein, at such a time he regards the Whole Universe as ugly. But I never said that, Bhaggava. This is what I do say: 'Whenever one reaches up to the Release, called the Beautiful, then he knows indeed what Beauty is'."

"The whole of the holy life consists in fellowship with what is lovely, in association with what is lovely, in intimacy with what is lovely. . . . Be not afraid of good works, brethren.

It is another name for happiness, for what is desired, beloved, dear and delightful—this word ‘good works’ . . . Brethren, he who would wait on me, let him wait on the sick . . . A man does evil deeds by going on the wrong path through desire, through hatred, through delusion, and through fear.”

“Homeless wandering  
The Sage with folk no longer maketh ties.  
Empty of lusts, showing no preference,  
With no man wageth wordy warfare more.”

“I quarrel not with the world, brethren. It is the world that quarrels with me. No preacher of the Norm, brethren, quarrels with anyone in the world.”

“Never by hatred is hatred appeased,  
Nay, but by not-hate: that is the old-time Law.”

“Thus, inwardly and outwardly or both, a brother abides in the contemplation of ideas . . . and grasps at nothing at all in the world.”

Here in Sarnath the Buddha set rolling the unsurpassed wheel of the Norm. Where there was tranquillity, he taught, there was no passion in delight. The ceasing of grasping was Nirvana. To be disinterested from things, to be detached in doing good, to be calm in benevolence, here was the doctrine. To cultivate *ahimsa*. “The right view is based on detachment, on passionlessness, on cessation, which is concerned with readiness for giving up”—even fame, even immortality. This is the Middle and profitable Path between self-mortification (which is self-hate and under-love of self) and sensuality. Not dissimilar from the teaching of the Buddha here, save only in this point of mortification, is the teaching of the Jains. M. K. Gandhi’s mother was under Jain influence.

It was Mephistopheles who told Faust that the core of all was denial and nothingness. The Enlightened One affirmed and did not deny. But he taught the way of Renunciation, Non-Resentment, of Harmlessness and Detachment. “That brethren, is called Right Aim in the Eightfold Path.”

However the Average Adjuster said to me: What is this fine talk about detachment and co-operation, renunciation

and defeat without resentment? Is not your skin as good as any others? What is this cancer of life and activity, this frustration of activity and my success? Why should I yield ambition to live like a bleating sheep? The saffron monks who say Om Padmi Hum, have they done so much?

But I replied: What matters is true Ideas. What is immortal is true Ideas issuing in judgement. What is powerful is true Ideas issuing in action.

I was thinking about all this when I returned to Benares past the temple devoted to the goddess of Truth, which is also known as the Monkey-Temple since monkeys, sacred to Hunamun the god of service, leapt hither and thither about the temple and by the pool in such numbers, leapt in endless activity before the figure of the dancing Kali, of the many veils, the many appearances.

I asked my guide what connection there might be between monkeys and Truth. He assured me that Hinduism so mixed the gods together, one god paying high compliments to another, so that their followers might be set an example and might not fight. I noted, however, that the monkeys declared that truth of activity, incessant, aimless, sordid, curious, in the human Yahoo which the Buddha gazing at the lotus, the Lord of the sapphire truth, refused to see. What meanings have the many coloured appearances of things, the leapings and dancings of the monkeys?

## CHAPTER XX

THE GREAT B.O.A.C. 'plane swung round in a curve to land in Dum-Dum airfield, Calcutta. Below one noticed the waterways lined with palms, and occasional fires of leaves being burned for their ash, later to be spread on the fields. This is my first view of Bengal.

My host is Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, one of the great political leaders of Bengal. I approached his house in a fine Studebaker car, with a furled standard at the bonnet. We drove in through gates where the porter springs to attention. Nothing can exceed the courtesy and hospitality of my host who puts at my disposal the freedom of his large house run almost entirely in European style, with its leather furniture which reminds me of the club rooms of some leading English club.

The following day, which was a Sunday, his charming daughters, Roma, who is eighteen, and Chittra, took me along to see a performance at the Kalika Theatre. A famous Southern Indian dancer, Srimati Shanta, was making an appearance in Calcutta and attracting immense crowds.

This purely Indian theatre was quite full before the curtain went up. If the men smoked cigarettes, the women wore their sacred caste marks on the forehead and even the hair, and glittered with ornaments in the nostril, a custom which lacks the symmetry of ear-rings, is ugly to Western eyes, and is slowly being abandoned in the East. Around the walls of the theatre were placed busts of the great leaders of Indian culture, Rabindranath Tagore, S. C. Das and the Swami Vivekananda. At other points were illuminated advertisements, written in English and Bengalee. No incongruity ever surprises me in India—and, anyhow, does not the European stage do the same, with its advertisements on the drop-curtain? I noticed later, in the interval, that soft drinks and potato chips were sold in this people's theatre, instead of the coffee and ices of the West.

The lights go out and the curtain rises. The small orchestra of musicians, with elongated drums and other unfamiliar instruments, takes its place. The drums are played by sharp finger taps, and produce a thrum-thrum noise. There is a high vocal accompaniment. I soon decide that it is so Indian that it is not for export. It could not go on tour with any prospect of success, because there is not enough common ground in judging what is music. The dancing is another matter and I next see its like in New York, in the work of Uday Shankar and his school, and in that of Ram Gopal.

Srimati Shanta takes the floor. She has a good presence and her role demands it—for, as much as Ruth Draper, she is the sole performer. She has to sustain the whole performance singlehanded with only the aid of the orchestra. This works itself up into a fury of calls and drum taps, accompanied by the incessant repetition of sound by a musical instrument which gives to the ear the impression of two brass door knobs being knocked together.

The danseuse displays a series of religious dances. There is here no especial *joie de vivre*, no sweeping movements, no reminiscence of ballet or tango. Attention is held by the dignity of the central figure. I do not like the flower garland stretching from the head down neck and back to the waist-band. I do not like the contrast of colour between the scarlet of the bagged trouser leg and the crimson of the wide sari. But the dignity of the dance grows on one.

The body moves but little, advances, retreats over a small area. Sudden abrupt movements occur, like those of some mechanical figure. But the effect of movement is given by the constant motion of the hand from the wrist, and the tapping of the foot. Every motion and gesture of every finger has its significance, as the scarlet-painted palm is opened and the long fingers are spread. Every appearance has its meaning, every leap its ritual, the accidental immortalized by art.

The cumulative effect of the repetitive music, the sing-song cries, have their effect. Where one expects to be bored, one becomes excited. They provide a sensual stimulation in the midst of which the nearly motionless rhythmic figure of the dancer conveys the meaning of the ritual dance almost by hypnosis.

While I was watching all this a messenger came to my seat. The message he gave me read: "R. N. Tagore is proceeding to Santiniketan to receive you personally there. . . . They want you to address them and lecture." So I was to go up to Rabindranath Tagore's famous school, and this message was from his nephew.

After the dances were over I was introduced to the accomplished dancer and her manager by Deb Nath Das. I had the curiosity to enquire from a musician concerning the accompaniment of one of the dances—a kind of reiterated "ha-ha-ver-swammee-ye-tum-tum" tune. But he could no longer recall it precisely. The music, he said, was repetitive in order that the musicians should not distract attention, by any skill of their own, from the dancer. It seemed clear that it was indeed improvised according to the inspiration of the moment. But it was also clear to me that the music, far from being incidental, however much it was impromptu, contributed essentially to the effect of tense passion of the whole.

I had later opportunities, both at Santiniketan and at Delhi, and even in New York, of watching Indian dancing, always ritualistic, often played by masked players, and of listening to Indian music. The effect upon me was always the same. My interest was aroused although the sounds and movements were unfamiliar and indeed often grotesque. The effect was hypnotic because the human beings, frozen in their movements by the tradition, became animate inhuman puppets. They had passion but not human passion. They left the impression of being half-god, half-animal, with the fascination of the robot, not modern but so ancient. And the music heightened the inhuman, sub-human, but passionate effect. Someday, I said, I will see some masque of Hunamun dancing.

It was not after a negligible experience that one came out of the sultry, fuliginous dark of the Kalika Theatre, with its tom-toms and passion, into the strong sunlight of the Calcutta streets at noon, and made our way home along the Chowringhee Street, past the Bengal Club. One walked away from where St. Andrew's Church, Calcutta, raises its primly Presbyterian spire above a building which reminds one of the lovely New England churches, in which the style of Wren is adapted to timber material—an elegant reminder in India of the

so-different, precise Scottish spirit, with its Doric clarity and its Caledonian restraint. Less than a year ago men had lurked, at noonday, in the doorways of these Calcutta streets within sight of the Scottish kirk, bearded men and turbaned, men in European dress and in dhotis, stealthily advancing on each other, in order to plunge a swift dagger into the unarmed one's throat in order to vindicate Allah or to retaliate on the Moslem for a wrong done. About eight thousand fell and the Indian vultures picked their bones. The fury was worthy of John Knox himself, that blood-thirsty prophet. "Never appeased," said the *Dhammapada*, "is the hatred of such men." To which shall the spirit of man respond—to the tom-tom or to the sound of the conches as they call to contemplation above the lakes filled with lotus? Or do such men require to control them the hell-fire of the Calvinist God?

## CHAPTER XXI

MY YOUNG guides have decided to take me over to see the house of their uncle, Subhas Bose. It is now a national shrine of Bengal. Subhas Bose, who shared the family characteristic of being a man of great charm, died when he was leading an army, with Japanese support, against the British. There is a glint of defiance about my hostesses' eyes as they offer me the privilege, which I accept, of going on this visit.

The house is high for Calcutta although only a two story structure, near Woodburn Park with its famous tennis lawns. The rooms are lofty. It is on the outside a reddish-coloured building, verandah'd and stately.

To many British Subhas Bose is "a quisling". If a "quisling" is a man who betrays his country by enlisting the support of a foreign power which will dominate it, then Indian nationalists have some right to say that it was not Bose who could be called a quisling. That he was not politically far-sighted, that he chose the wrong side, may be true. But at least he could claim that he was a disinterested fighter for Indian freedom, whatever might have been said of some of his followers to whom not all Indians feel kindly.

Outside the main door of the house, now a building owned by his followers of the I.N.A. (Indian National Army), is a memorial stone with a lamp burning in front of it. I felt that my features were being watched as I was told that it was a replica of a monument erected by the loving hands of his followers in Singapore and dynamited by the British when they retook the place. But I believe in the principle of courtesy, not least when respecting the ideals of other nationalities than my own, and I can preserve a poker face.

From the ground we climbed to the first floor. We removed our shoes because we were about to enter a shrine. I conformed to Indian etiquette. In the living room everything was preserved as Subhas had left it, although the scrolls of honour he had received and his swords had been added to the



collection. I noticed brass flower vases, probably Japanese presents, with the swastika stamped on them, the swastika which is universal in the East and about which, it may be, Dr. Goebbels learned when he was a student in Hyderabad.

I noted, as I always do, the books in the library. The Koran, Professor Raleigh's *Shakespeare*, Albert Schweitzer's *Development of Indian Thought*, Lowell Thomas' *Raiders of the Deep*. In the bedroom, photos of the dead man rested on the bed and, garlanded, in the chair. Everything was kept, even to the shaving brush. Pilgrims were coming up and removing their shoes all the time I was there. There was a constant stream—on a small scale what one saw around the tomb of Lenin in the Red Square and that of Sun Yat-sen on the Purple Shadow Mountain by Nanking. On January 23rd, Subhas' birthday, the crowds had been uncontrollable.

As we drive across Calcutta later in the day, we passed the large white dome of the Victory Memorial. "The British put it up," Roma, the elder of my young guides, said, "and got some maharajas to contribute. It is a bad imitation of the Taj Mahal." The younger motioned her, with a surprised face, not to offend me. I was far too hardened to political comments in various parts of the world to feel offended, although I appreciated that native Bengalee courtesy which was immediately concerned lest I should feel wounded. Later the niece of the dead Subhas took me to task again for British sins, and I was grateful that she thought it worth while to be frank and to tell me what she thought to be wrong.

"India," she said in this spring of 1947, "is a very unhappy country. And it will be until it has its independence. 1943 was a fine rice harvest. But the people died in the streets, children and grown-ups. The rice had been sent to feed the troops in the Middle East. It was terrible. If you gave them rice at that stage they could not digest it."

Later I went and dined with the Quakers, the Society of Friends, in Wood Street, a community that had done so much for the relief of suffering during the Bengal famine. The Jesuit Fathers had told me how great that work had been, when they both collaborated in this task of relief of human suffering. With both I was able to discuss the needs of the common folk of Bengal, transcending political ambitions, and

the concern of these improverished people to live their lives peacefully.

Coming back, through the streets of Calcutta lined with their box-like shops, I saw an Indian dressed like a Scotsman and parading the streets, I suppose for coppers, with bag-pipes gaily coloured and in size like a child's toy balloon. I cannot imagine a sight more calculated to infuriate the Scottish temperament. But it was an oddity which seemed to me all of a piece with the men squatting in the streets and the cows lying on the pavement. And the tartan seemed only slightly discordant in a scene of such bright colour. At least the Indian in pursuit of pence had no complaint against the Scotsman.

## CHAPTER XXII

MY FRIEND, Dr. Amiya Chakravarty, himself a friend of Tagore, thought that I ought to know more of the renascent Hinduism which finds its expression in the Ramakrishna Mission.

Vivekananda said: "God is the poor". It was one of the more striking phrases of the man whom his admirers would say was the St. Paul of modern Hinduism, the organizing spirit of the Ramakrishna movement. The less kindly would ask what this man, who made triumphal lecture tours in America and India, knew of the poor. The genius of Ghosh who assumed the name of Vivekananda, they would say, lay in his decision to take one holy man, among the many hundreds in India—admittedly a remarkable holy man, Ramakrishna—and to bring him to the attention of the world thanks to the efforts of Ghosh's own arresting and even flamboyant personality, at the very time when the West was becoming interested in the great Eastern empire, and looked again for religious light from the East as its own grew dim.

Romain Rolland, in his book on Vivekananda, tells how he first attracted world attention. It is not nothing that he and his teacher attracted so profoundly the attention of so fastidious a writer as Romain Rolland. Vivekananda sailed to America, the fare being provided by the Maharaja of Khitri. The Maharaja also suggested the change of name and insisted upon the new swami, his protégé, wearing a remarkable dress. "At the moment of departure (from Bombay) he put on, with the robe of red silk and ochre turban, the name of Vivekananda which he was about to impose upon the world." It was in 1891, in Porbandar—four years after M. K. Gandhi, born in Porbandar, had left for London—that a scholar had told Vivekananda to go to the West, where his thought would be better understood than in his own country. Two years later he had found his princely patron and acted on this inspiration.

In 1893 Vivekananda arrived in Chicago to attend the Parliament of Religions. Romain Rolland writes:

"Amongst them all it was the young man who represented nothing—and had everything—the man belonging to no sect, but rather to India as a whole, who drew the glance of the assembled thousands. His fascinating face, his noble stature, and the gorgeous apparel, which heightened the effect of this apparition from a legendary world, hid his own emotion . . ."

"Each of the other orators had spoken of his God, of the God of his sect. He—he alone—spoke of all their Gods, and embraced them all in the Universal Being."<sup>1</sup>

There is only one religion, and all religions are true. This was the message, simple, novel and arresting. The flight from the world of Buddhism is true; and the Marxist religion of materialism; and the fanatical monotheism of Islam with its dualism and transcendent Creator; and the fertility religion of the Vishvanath and the *lingam* gods; and the monism of the Vedanta . . . all true. Nevertheless, in a skilful address, Vivekananda told his Chicago audience: "Religion is not the crying need of India—but bread". Vivekananda had the gift of the arresting and the unexpected phrase, the startling half-truth.

Vivekananda was the follower of Ramakrishna. Ramakrishna was in many ways as complex and many sided as Vivekananda.

"This divine communion with living, loving, suffering humanity was to be expressed in a passionate, but pure and pious symbol. When in 1872 Ramakrishna's wife came to him at Dakshineswar for the first time, the tenderness, compounded of religious respect purged of all trace of desire and sensual disturbance, recognized the Goddess under her veil; and he made a solemn avowal of it. One night in May, when everything had been prepared for worship, he made Sasada Devi sit in the seat of Kali, and as priest he accomplished the ritual ceremonies, the *shorhashi puja* (a tantric ceremony), the adoration of womanhood. Both of them were in a condition of semi-conscious or super-conscious ecstasy. When he came to himself he hailed his companion as the Divine Mother. In his eyes She was incarnate in the living symbol of immaculate humanity.

<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland: *The Life of Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama).

"The sole witness of this strange scene was the priest from the neighbouring temple of Vishnu.

"Ramakrishna's cult of womanhood did not limit itself to his blameless wife. He recognized the Mother even in the most degraded prostitutes. 'I myself have seen this man standing before these women,' said Vivekananda, 'and falling on his knees at their feet, bathed in tears, saying, "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street and in another form Thou art the universe. I salute Thee, Mother. I salute thee"'.<sup>1</sup>

As I learned of these things, I wondered whether there was indeed more common to all religions, atheist Buddhism—which places man in the centre of the world and man's desire to escape from the horror of himself—and monotheist Islam and the others, than just that something which enabled them all to be called religious. I wondered whether truth, even the deeper truth concerning human nature, was as amorphous as Vivekananda's Hinduism supposed or whether it was so well to transcend good and evil. I wondered, not whether there were not a central true core to which even the most primitive animism pointed; but whether this central mystic truth, which Jacques Maritain recognized, did not exist in very different degrees. The core was an awe for that which is greater than ourselves—that which is truly greater, by true values, than ourselves, not lower or stupider. But then, if all is one and all ways alike lead to truth, are there true values? Charity, I concluded, is the truest of values. But charity is not blind, or unable to distinguish true from false, good from evil.

First I visited the Ramakrishna Mission in the poor quarter of Calcutta, with its school, its lectures and its evening classes. Here I talked with yellow-robed swami Nityaswanpananda, who told me about the surprising development of their movement and the great social work they had done in Calcutta. Then the swami, along with my friend Chakravarty and the well-known encyclopaedist Professor Sarkar and myself, set out for the banks of the Hooghly branch of the Ganges and for the temple of Belur.

<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland: *The Life of Ramakrishna* (Advaita Ashrama).

Built largely with American money it had been most fortunate in its architect. Orthodoxly Hindu in structure, the temple has a certain cleanness of outline which betrays the Western influence. Around it and leading down to the water's edge of the great river, the Ganges, flowing black in the darkness, were the neat houses of the settlement, picked out with light.

First I talked with the resident monks, the swamis. Their president, swami Virajananda, is a man of seventy-six. They told me that they were not content to rest in quietude, "eating the mango fruit". They "saw the same self in everybody", and were therefore concerned to render social service to everybody. To hurt another was to hurt oneself. The greatest unity spelled the greatest good.

The discussion turned upon the doctrines of M. K. Gandhi. With some of these they did not agree. They did not agree with the Mahatma's pacifist interpretation of the *Gita*. A few only had the vocation of turning the other cheek, as Christ had taught. Christ it was well to remember, was an Oriental teacher. But Hinduism, unlike Buddhism and unlike the Jain sect which had influenced the Mahatma (for his mother listened to the Jains), believed, not in pacifism, but in reciprocity.

Again the conversation turned upon this nature of the self and upon their doctrine of the Trinity: the Trinity of Being or Brahm, of Knowledge and of Bliss, like the Christian Trinity of the Omnipresent Creator, the Christ Logos or Word, and the Holy Paraclete. Brahm could not itself (or Himself) be known, for Knowledge implied duality and in Brahm there was no duality, no "Knower" and "Known".

It seemed to me that I heard here more the accents of reformed Hinduism, than of Vivekananda's "universal religion" with its embracing of "all the Gods". Even Hinduism has combined a tendency to welcome pantheism along with an insistence on its own pantheistic or panentheist monism in philosophy.

I walked across the dark courtyard and found indeed a pantheon with new gods. The followers of Ramakrishna have always claimed that he was only a better man. They did not claim divine honours for him. However I ascended the steps of the temple with its mixture of the traditional Indian style of architecture and a Western style, not unlike the Madeleine in Paris. I entered (for here there are no caste prohibitions

or exclusion of the alien) a lofty nave with great columns and marble mosaics. At a distance I heard the chanting and it was beautiful and familiar to my ear. It was the tune of a Gregorian chant.

Inside the nave, if I may use the term, sat cross-legged on the floor a group of worshippers, not mixed, but the women sitting behind. In the brilliantly lit sanctuary appeared, gilt and white like a chryselephantine statue of Olympian Zeus, a ten-foot-high statue of the bearded Ramakrishna. Before it priests waved fans and swung incense censers, while the altar was decked with flowers. Incessantly the bells tinkled as the organ's notes rose and fell.

The sonorous Sanskrit chant continued. My friends provided a translation of this hymn to Sri Ramakrishna:

“If devotion is directed to Thee, O Ramakrishna, the way of Divine Truth, then with desires all fulfilled in Thee, they forthwith cross over this sea of passions; for Thy feet are like nectar to the mortals, quelling the waves of death. Therefore, O Thou friend of the lowly, Thou art my only refuge.”

I left the temple, where the Sanskrit chant amid the tinkling bells still rose and fell, to cross over to the several-roomed house or cell in which Vivekananda died. Here again, as in the temple itself, we removed our shoes and saw the carefully arranged possessions of the dead man, the bed, the chairs, the garlanded photographs of him.

I realized abruptly what I had increasingly groped towards for some weeks. India is a land where the distinction between gods and men, between gods and holy men and maharajas, has never been very sharp or distinct. And my settled impression had become that India suffered from too many gods . . . I remembered, however, the shrewd caution of my friend in Travancore. Perhaps the gods really made very little real difference to the life of the people, which went on much as before, burdened with the heavy yoke of caste but first concerned, whatever Vivekananda might think about their god-like quality, with the task of getting food and drink, sleeping, mating, being born, dying and maybe finding, in that rhythm, Brahman who is, Brahmā who creates, and Vishnu who becomes and preserves, and Siva who destroys, as their symbols.

## CHAPTER XXIII

SO SHORT a while of direct study in India had brought into focus the occasional reading of years about the Hindu religion. And without understanding this religion I was sure that it was impossible to understand India's leaders and, above all, the Mahatma.

Broadbased and lofty, it was an impressive structure. Philosophically it was considered and elaborated in a fashion to which Mohammedanism, with its simple theology and simple dualism, offered no comparison unless it were in the mystical philosophy of a few Sufis or in the Hellenic-derived philosophy of Avicenna and Averrhoes. What had Islam to offer to compare with the philosophy of the Vedanta and the Upanishads?

Of this indeed, since the days of the German philosopher Schopenhauer, the West has heard so much. The starting point of the philosophy of Hegel—"in the beginning is Being which, without qualities, is indistinguishable from Not-Being (not existing, not-endowed-with-qualities), of which the synthesis is Becoming"—has obvious debts to it. So has the famous Hegelian dialectic, of which the Marxists talk so much. Only the assessment of the significance of history as "real" is different.

But this "idealism" which is so close to materialism—and some early and received Indian philosophy is materialistic—this monistic philosophy of the Vedanta, is very far from the whole, or even the more striking part, of Hinduism. There is Brahman, the neuter, the Eternal, the Absolute, the All-Sustaining; but there is Maya, which is that which is sustained. So too, in Buddhist doctrine, there is Nirvana (be Nirvana the all-being, the *plenum*, or be it the void which was, as *Genesis* says, "in the beginning"); but there is also Samsara, the stream of events conditioned by *dharma*, by the fate of this and that. Buddhism is indeed only a Hindu heresy; and the Buddha was not a Buddhist but died believing himself to be a Hindu.



There are also the great Principles or, in the language of Christian theology, the Persons of Brahm expressed in relation to Becoming. There is Brahmā the creator, Vishnu the preserver, Siva the destroyer. But, in the complexities of Hinduism, each Person of this Undivided Trinity, the Holy Trimurti, can wear, and Siva has often worn, some of the characteristics of the other. Siva and his spouse Kali have been portrayed, in Indian art and cults, as the whole of Becoming, to the neglect of other forms. Kali is the Great Mother, *Magna Mater*; but she is also the goddess who destroys all, the terrible. She, Kali, is so akin to Kala, Time: she is Chronos who eats all her offspring. She is adorned with skulls and drips blood. Also she is Truth, which respects no man's sensitivities.

Hinduism worships in God the All, the total-creator, the total-sustainer, who created good and will end it, and who created also evil and will end it. Brahm is beyond our minds, the incomprehensible in space, in time. He is the God of Job: It is. It is what it is. (The Buddha also is called Tathagata, "That, such it is", the Way beyond argument, the symbol of the eternal). In the words of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "Thou are thou . . . Whoever resorts to any deity as 'other', thinking 'He is one, and I another', knoweth not." "Some there are," so writes the great German mystic and Dominican, Meister Eckhart, "so simple as to think of God as if he dwelt *there* and of themselves as *here*. It is not so. God and I are one." The Eternal God is neither black nor white, neither male nor female, neither here as against there, or there as against here. And only he who says that he does not comprehend, comprehends. No anthropomorphic heresy here. Siva also, who is one of the Persons of Brahm, is beyond limit or comprehension. Nevertheless He "who has the Moon in his hair", the coming and the destroying, is "he", is the male principle, a cosmic more than individual principle.

But there is the other side. I have seen the temples of Benares, the temple of Vishvanath, the Primal Energy. Had I seen the great and ancient cave-temple of Elephanta, a temple of the same primitive awe as the cave dwellers' places of sacrifice in South France which carries us back before the beginning of record, when humanity began to emerge as such—had I seen there into the womb of the

temple, its holy of holies, I should have seen the same emblem of Siva, the phallus, the *lingam*.

Siva is the terrible, the unashamed, the sex principle. Kali is the female principle, and has as emblem the *yoni*. So too the Greek letter *delta*, according to the lexicographers, is a female symbol. These are the two principles, polar opposites of what remains the same, the *yin* and *yang* of Chinese mythology, the planet signs of Jove and Venus. In some temples the two symbols are brought together. Hinduism, far from always seeking to symbolize the eternal, as Buddhism uses the Buddha image as symbol of tranquillity, also symbolizes the elementally actual from which a more genteel civilization is in flight. When European critics and Marxists speak of "the practical" as distinct from the "other worldly", they mean primarily wage standards, so called standards of living with their accompaniments, more cars, more food, stomach-requirements. These may be, and are, neglected. Famine-stricken India has neglected them, because she cannot have both ample food and unlimited population. She prefers population and the biological warfare in order to assure her place in history. But the stomach is not "more actual" or practical among "things worldly" than generation and the close-knit Indian family.

More, however, is involved than a practical choice. The clue to economic activity is the love in man, and quite peculiarly in Western man, of power. Hinduism seeks reconciliation and atonement by dramatizing generation—which has much to do with race potency and little to do with individual career ambition—the coming and the passing away, Becoming passing cloud-like across the face of Eternity. It shows God as the All, and the All as what it is: not only the beneficent but also the horrible, not only the beneficent but the amoral and immoral. Siva has the symbol of the growing *lingam*, the becoming, but also of fire, cosmic fire flashing like the growing cloud and the flash of fissionable material in explosion, the *axis mundi*, transfixing the world, the mother earth, by creating and destroying fire. Hinduism here offers something which makes individual ambition look very foolish. It has a truth which women, who have to sacrifice their lives to nature, can grasp more readily than ambitious men.

## CHAPTER XXIV

It is difficult, and almost impossible in these matters, that the European mind, deeply dualistic, deeply puritan and inhibited, should understand the Indian mind. To the Indian mind it is obvious that God is all, and that all includes the terrible and is beyond moralisation. Only acceptance moralizes it for us, the acceptance of That Such as it Is. Few Europeans, because they are Greek-trained, fail to recognize that they have something to learn from the Vedanta. Plato describing his ideas and his cave of illusion is not far from a Vedantist. But they cannot feel that they have anything to learn from Siva, from Kali, even from the Greek Dionysus with his orgies and bacchantics. Indian asceticism does not seek to reject the flesh but, at least in most schools, to control it. So too has Western monasticism sought—but there has always been the Gnostic suspicion that matter and the flesh were, of themselves, evil. The *lingam* and the *yoni* partook of the nature of evil. Here the antipodal of the Eternal Idea, Brahm, was not, like Siva or like Kali, God; but was the Devil, serving under God.

Christianity, in its modern form, has been ashamed of its demonology. It has never worked out any adequate theory of the devil, although some occasional philosopher will come along to say that most men's God is his Devil. It has never, in recent generations, made clear whether God is the All-Mighty, the Creator, creating also evil (as Isaiah indicates), willing to create evil, Brahm and in this aspect Siva. Or whether God is indeed demi-God, limited human God, and good creating only good. Or whether evil was docetic, was illusion, as the Christian Scientists say. Ancient heresies, old orthodoxy considered these things.

The Devil, being the snake, the male principle in rebellion, according to *Genesis* tempted the woman who offered the apple of conscious sexual knowledge to her man. By worshipping it, and knowing evil and by contrast good, and doing evil, tempted in the flesh by the devil, they fell. The worship of the *yoni*,

which is nature, by conscious human beings, orthodoxy said, is devil worship; and the core and very heart of false worship, for it distracts from the greater and substitutes the less significant as in the Temptation in Eden. From it sprang the stirring of the animal passions among those who, in their pride, oppose their passions to the law; and from this sprang murder and the fratricides and rebellious self-consciousness, but also history: Sex-lust made spiritual rebellion alive. But the divine reason can control the passions and reshape history as theodicy.

The seed of the woman, after reconciliation, could conquer Satan. Satan had set going, for the purpose of wrath, a power which by grace would trample down Satan's own, and conquer wrath. God is not Satan but the All-Mighty Lord of Satan, himself the denying spirit, the proud and revolting archangel, kept in check by Michael who defends men from those who "go about in the world for the ruin of souls".

It is an historic fact that the Rig-Veda, remembering its Persian origins, its kinship to the Zend Avesta, is dualist. There is a *mantra* in the Rig-Veda, which declares the fight of the Aryan good against evil.

But it is also an historic fact that in India, until the coming of Islam, the worshippers of the phallus conquered in culture the followers of the holy Rig-Veda. The aboriginal Dravidians imposed their customs on the fair and conquering Aryans, the city dwellers on the pastoral men.

In the West the opposite has happened. The Amalekites and the heathen, who worshipped with fertility rites in high places, have been slain and cut in pieces. The groves of Syrian Ashtaroth, the fertility goddess, were an abomination and have been levelled. Who worshipped the *lingam* and *yoni*, the fleshly line and circle, could not worship truly the God of Power, the Lord of Hosts, the Lord of the sacred, geometric Pentagram, and the Logos-God of the pure idea, the Word which is the sword of power. The Mother of God stands ever against the first Eve. She is the immaculate, free from the original sin of pride, the humble who has been exalted, in whom only the principle of the family and not lust is symbolized.

Shall we say of Kali that she is hot with lust, with Bacchantic power and *mana*; and that over against her stands the cold vessel of an idea? Just there lies the problem, and it is

the very real problem, on any deep analysis, of human civilization. It is the problem of the relation of the idea, the eternal, to the passions. Over against Kali, the demon-Mother, who is also Astharoth, stands the Star of the Sea—who was Isis, who piously gathered together the broken body, broken in sacrifice, of the wheaten Osiris. Over against Kali stands the figure of the Virgin Mother of God. No symbolism can be more opposite. They are polar opposites, deep in the human soul. We must choose. Is the *yoni* really the true symbol of life, and the quest to return to the womb not to be born again, but to rest at one, the final quest? Or to be born again with new animal power? Or is this a stupid, heathen folly? Does the West, especially in its typical cults of power, provide more effective motives for living than the nature cult? About what else does the Syrian, St. Paul, write except about these things?

Buddhism is a child of Hinduism, as Christianity is of Judaism—a rebel child. The Buddha becomes the figure of the untroubled, the passionless, the eternal. There are the *yab-yum* statues, such as I saw in Travancore, of time embracing eternity. The open lotus itself is the figure of Cosmic generation. And the Buddha is seated in the lotus. But the Buddha remains always in detachment and contemplation. The Buddha figure, like da Vinci's Christ-figure, is almost sexless.

Gandhiism, as we shall see, resembles Buddhism in this that Gandhi, like Buddha, is a great son of India who is only to be explained in his reaction against India. Gandhiism, which is under Christian influences, is a reaction, while claiming orthodoxy, especially against the Kali elements in Hinduism (although Mr. Gandhi can worship in the Kali temple). Gandhi is a Westerner in the East, if an Easterner in the West. The celibacy cult of the Mahatma is one sign of the revolt against the Symbol of Kali. In Christianity even the lotus symbol is absent, the *rosa mystica* recondite. Is that its strength or its weakness, as against Hinduism? Which has greater power to cast out devils?

## CHAPTER XXV

FAUST has now wandered across India from Karachi to Cape Cormorin and from Cape Cormorin to Calcutta. He had observed the traditional system of government of that great empire and he had observed the multiplicity of Indian religions and cults. It was impossible for him not to reflect whether these religions did good—whether religion itself did good. The reader may bear with me for a few pages to hear the conclusions.

Could I really admire the worship of Ramakrishna or the *darshans* of Aurobindo? Could I preserve my own integrity if I did? And yet I recalled talks in Delhi with men of the highest intellectual standing who belonged to Sri Aurobindo's *ashram*. They were clearly good men, men of integrity, men whose numbers one would wish to increase in any society. I recalled my talks with the monks of the Ramakrishna Mission on the hilltop in Travancore. Whatever criticism one might offer, these disinterested men were men above and not below the normal human average. And I knew that in China where the traditional philosophy was not a religion, save in the most general possible sense, the affairs of man were not so conspicuously better—nor in other countries which it would be possible to mention.

Everywhere men desired to till the soil, to see the product of their handiwork achieved in peace, to love, to follow the ritual of the seasons, to enjoy some little of the possible poetry of human life. The mother's cry to her baby was the same in every land, even where the nations or even the sects within nations desired to cut each other's throats and to throw out mother and child to die of starvation. The politicians were always in their own eyes right. "Only we the people are wrong," as the cry came from embittered peasants in China.

What contribution here did Hinduism make? What contribution did religion make? Hinduism imposed the yoke of caste, which its defenders rationalized as functional. Islam

divided the country vertically instead of horizontally, and made new nations to fight, broke down caste and then subjugated women. Moslem stabbed Hindu and Hindu stabbed Moslem in the name of religion. But then, if it had not been in the name of religion, it would have been done in the name of a party. The appetite of the politicians for power would always lead to something being stirred up. It was not the religion that caused the stabbing; but it provided the excuse. There was the lust for power of the politicians, but, alas! there was something else. The stabbings provided excitement. And there was the lust of the common man for excitement (called "idealism") as a cure for the infinite boredom and *ennui* of his life.

Did a tantric religion stimulate this false excitement? Or was that a matter—this low ignition point of passion—of climate and temper? Did Hindu sensuality cast out ambition? Did, on the contrary, a contemplative, disinterested, Buddhist or Jain religion provide some alternative outlet, something useful to do, which gave a man a sense of the worthwhile in life? I thought of the schools and dispensaries of the Ramakrishna Reform, which India needed every one.

Hinduism, in some recognizable form, has endured for four millennia in India. It may be changed by other influences, by some other form of Christianity, for example, not too alien to it. I saw this possibility in Travancore. India was nearly, for a brief while, converted by Buddhism. But in some form Hinduism will endure, and we may dispense with argument on this score. Any change will be by syncretism and re-fashioning. Hinduism is there because it corresponds with the wishes and dream life of so many millions in India. Not its cults, but its philosophy, has power outside India and conveys a teaching which merits investigation for the truth that alone can give it power.

Hinduism can be reformed, as M. K. Gandhi has reformed it, by pressing the issue, successfully in so many places, for temple entry by every caste. The fight has been waged against caste barriers. But the coming of the machine, the condition of modern industry and of the modern factory, will do more to destroy caste than any direct religious reform. There is not yet

a caste of automobile drivers, still less a sub-caste of Ford drivers, who will not eat with the Chevrolet drivers. It is these external factors that will break off the accretions of Hinduism and change the social system, the clan or family system, in which it developed. The hope of India lies in bridging these community gulfs by a new functionalism of work in unions and associations replacing an obsolete one.

The deep truth yet of Hinduism lies in its answer to Faustian man, in its answer to human ambition and self-interest. It lies beyond "social reform" and political change and "sharing out the loot", which begins in democracy and ends in tyranny, as Plato and Aristotle both said. Its answer is not solely or chiefly Apollonian, like the Greek. It sinks man back into nature. Even in its images of the *lingam* and the *yoni*, it does this. Before the individual was the male and the female; the life urge to birth; the desire to escape from fate by rebirth, to escape even from rebirth into the blessed womb of nature. Only the man with full, non-hypocritical sexual knowledge will go beyond sexual knowledge to a balanced control. Hinduism is immemorial and man is transient. It tells of the rhythm of the seasons; and he tells of his will and wishes. It tells of the pulse of the real, of the universe; and he is harried by cares which soon will not matter. With what difficulty can he attain detachment. But, by some shock, eyes can be opened and the road to emancipation, not *from* reality but *into* seeing reality, becomes open to the *sannyasin*.

Does Hinduism destroy the individual, destroy the value of the soul that goes through so many reincarnations? Did Calvinism, let us ask, with its predestination, destroy the will of its adherents? Do Gandhi and Vivekananda and the *swamis* lack, with all their introspection, an adequate sense of the individual? Did Tagore? This is a foolish accusation of logicians without thought for psychology. The sense of unity with the godhead and of force derived therefrom is, if anything, too proudly frequent in India, not too rare. In India too many individual gods and semi-gods walk abroad. Hinduism is not identical, at least for the elect, with anti-individualist caste or even family. But perhaps only for the elect.

Is what is lacking in monistic Hinduism intolerance, intolerance of injustice, and zeal for righteousness? How



often this dualism is but a name for fanaticism and driving out a lazy superstition by a fierce and bloody one! How many are seduced by dominion, calling hatred of their fellows by the name "love of their fellows" or community love and fraternity. "Fraternity or death". The world is in no condition to condemn Hinduism for excessive tolerance, although we may distrust the amoralism of refusal to praise the good and condemn, by our own action, the evil.

Perhaps the real criticism was given to me by my friend in Travancore. "Christianity is a religion of pain." Hinduism stirs awe and even demands blood. Kali-worship, worship of the black and terrible Kali, sees pain as the complement of delight, the delight of the eater in the eaten. It does not see pain as the fruit of rebellion, original rebellion by nature in disharmony or willed rebellion of the un-at-oned soul, causing pain to proceed on its mission. It does not see the Divine Love of the All-Powerful who wins by the *via dolorosa* of humanity and not by striking down the evil doer by the power of deity, striking him down with the ruthlessness of the Eternal Justice which stands above all-too-human pleas. It does not recognize the good in man as divine, the incipient and budding reason; but only the implacable Fate of the Cosmos, the dance of Siva who respects no persons. It is the *bare self* which can, by more knowledge, automatically know itself as at one with the Divine Atman or Self; not the *value-possessing self*, which is brought into at-one-ment with the Divine by grace and charity. I say this neither in ignorance nor in disrespect of the immense discipline of this knowledge, nor unaware of the risk of pride in private virtue. Orthodox Hinduism had, for me, something I could not find myself in: its un-Gandhian indifference to Significance and Value and the fight of the idea in History. This indifference did not seem to me to be synonymous with tolerance and charity.

I knew that, for the few in Hinduism, the Vedanta had quite a different emphasis from the broad-based, conservative, popular religion, with its little gods and its intimate connection with the population problem of India. I knew that the *Gita*, together with the *Upanishads*, provided not only a metaphysic of Being but an ethic at least as profound as the

Book of Job, not dissimilar and far more elaborate. It taught that the inscrutable Godhead inscrutably loved virtue. But why, it never said. There was, moreover, a stern morality in the doctrine of *Karma* which taught that the unpleasant of this world not only might, but should, receive unpleasantness.

I knew that there were passages in the *Rig-Veda* that indicated a dualistic ethic of the strife of good and evil, to balance the monistic ethic of power and of acceptance of the little gods of nature; and that the modern Brahmo-Samaj, under Christian influences, and the Arya-Samaj, in reviving the Vedas, had newly stressed this dualism, or fight of good and evil, alongside the old Hindu monism and preoccupation with reconciling man with the Almighty Absolute which is above good and evil. And here Hindu religion began to come into unison with that of the West—which had solved largely the problem of morals and “the Good God”, but at the expense of the problem of being and of Almighty God.

I knew that, in utter logical conflict with the mood of the Vedanta, Brahman was described or defined, “in Its secondary sense”, by brahmins as *Sat Chit Ananda*—“Truth, Mind and Joy”—seeming here to reintroduce the dualism inherent in the traditional Christian ethical values, the Ethics of Beauty, as distinct from the Ethics of Power.

Conversely I knew that if the *Gita* taught how man could recognize his own self as at one with the Divine self, the ancient Fathers of the Christian Church had not hesitated to say that “God became man in order that man might become God” (that is, at one with God in the tranquil vision), instead of a natural Yahoo. I knew that the Brahmo-Samaj and Vivekananda were not the last attempts to arrive at a universal religion of mysticism.

And I was fairly certain that the Mahatma only remained a Hindu precisely because he believed that he could reconcile this faith with waging the very Western fight against evil (but not by violence in resisting evil), while also affirming the Eastern mysticism by which all belonged to and was sustained by God. In brief, it was just here that the Mahatma was the evangelist of the West to the East as well as apostle of the East to the West. To recognize this was the first step in the estimation of the Mahatma's importance.

The West is naturally Arian; naturally pragmatic; and sees only the humanity of God, to be left in the end just with an experimenting God and some experimenting men. The East is naturally Monophysite; naturally "objective"; and sees chiefly the omnipotence of God and the divinity of man, as manifested in the demigods and mahatmas who wander the earth full of the holy spirit. To the West Christ appealed as Jesus of Nazareth, and to the East as the Second Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the greatest of *avatars* and the archetype, the Platonic Idea of Man. Did "the Experimenter with Truth", M. K. Gandhi, give a clue to the nature of the truth in both views? Here was an Eastern with a very Western (or more Christian than Western) gospel of practical charity. I thought the answer to be "yes".

Although Hinduism has epic heroes, heroism in meeting the tragic element in life is not its message. The great drama is, for it, an epic drama, but not a tragic drama. It is not a tragedy of how men less than eternal shall strive, and fail, and win in their war to achieve the idea which is the nearest vision, behind moving images, of the eternal—the drama of the Divine Idea becoming incarnate more and more by the spirit. And, although aesthetically the drama of the Mass may be so similar to that of Hinduism, yet there is in that drama of the crucifix that which I do not see in the Vedanta nor yet in Benares.

If this then, for the moment, is the conclusion of Faust on his pilgrimage, who is the true Christian?

Vivekananda said in Chicago: "With all your brag and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword? Yours is a religion preached in the name of luxury. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country." Was then Gandhi the true Christian? Or was Vivekananda's a Hindu religion of sensuality?

Another voice said: Woe, woe, to you hypocrites. One is entitled to ask, and should ask, who are the true Christians to-day?

Not, I think we must reply despite Vivekananda's suggestion, orthodox Hindus. Not, that is, unless we are prepared



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India]*

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India]*

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu

to take, as representative of orthodox Hinduism, the Great Protester, the Great Eccentric, the Mahatma.

No wonder, I think, that Islam like Judaism found so many of the primitive powerful beliefs unclean. That is why the followers of the Prophet have destroyed, stone by stone, the temples of Vishvanath. But these primeval gods stamped over the backs of their worshippers like elephants. The under-world of the spirit came out into consciousness and symbolism. And was not the under-world also part of the one, indivisible world of the real, the curious world of human nature and of nature, so full of terrible and cruel marvels? The dream world of India, which was also a nightmare world, was yet a world of symbols signifying very actual things. And was not the brahmin, who understood the pure Vedanta, able to control it? Did not, however, Rasputin understand a tantric worship? And did not Rasputin have power and fascination? On these aboriginal things the cultivated brahmin turned his back.

Hinduism, like Lamaism, offered not only the Vedic religion of the Aryan and the Vedanta philosophy of the Real but also a popular religion, wrought out through the ages by a compromise with primitive Dravidian and aboriginal belief. In the worship of Kali and in so many other worships the first object was no middle class morality but to awake awe. Even by horror or by orgiastic ritual to awake awe and to stir the waters, not of man's conscience, but of his consciousness, even of his sub-consciousness—this seemed worth while. Thus, too, the holy man was a man commanding awe, a stirrer of strange psychic manifestations, a man having *mana* or magic power. Such a man might be Rasputin; he might be Ramakrishna.

Hinduism, indeed, with its assertion of so many ways to truth, of so many truths, so many values that none knew what value was, its tolerance overshooting justice and confounding reason—Hinduism itself, with its razor-edged distinctions about the real and its ambiguity about the reality of Maya which is indeed human life—Hinduism itself had led the way to this doubt about the here and now and its value in history, that ended in that flight from action against which the Brahmo-Samaj and Gandhi were protestants. And here the followers of the Prophet had seen with a less subtle but a clearer vision, and had

not let their feet lose the firm ground of experience and of felt values, to be carried away in the lotus-filled dream stream of speculation and symbol beyond subtle symbol. Hinduism was cosmocentric, so much so that good and evil became lost in the universal flood. Christianity and Islam, in their *Divina Commedia*, were anthropocentric, neither utterly outside history nor utterly in the midst of the sensuous functioning of life; but concerned with the idea in history, the victory and the loss.

It was with refreshment that I looked again at the simple minarets, the gaunt puritan emptiness of the mosques, the quiet pools for ablution. When, therefore, I was in Delhi, I made sure that I saw the Great Mosque with its vast courtyard. I mounted its stairs slowly when, as dusk fell over Delhi, the muezzin annouhced three times: "Allah akbar. Allah akbar. Allah akbar. Great is Allah. I bear witness that Allah is One. Also I bear witness that Mohammed is His Prophet." Over the evening air the positive affirmation of faith came, clear and comprehensible. It was the protest against Siva, the cry of the intolerant Holy Book against the universal symbols, of the desert daylight against the hot on-coming night. Perhaps so superficial to set against the wisdom of the Upanishads. But so true in one part.

## CHAPTER XXVI

GUIDED by the admirably efficient chauffeur of my host, Sarat Chandra Bose, I found my way through the encamped crowds at Calcutta's Hooghly railway station. I took my place in the compartment with its bunk-like seats, where passengers sit on leather shelves and face each other. Through the gathering dusk, past small stations with their waving hurricane lights, I travelled north to Santiniketan.

Here I was met by members of Visva-Bharati, the college founded by India's greatest recent poet, Sir Rabindranath Tagore. The first to greet me was Mr. Khitish Roy, the secretary of the poet's nephew, who is now responsible for the organization of the school. Mr. Roy was dressed in the white kaddah toga to which I had become accustomed in all Congress quarters. When I first met the Vice-Chancellor of the largest university in the world, Calcutta University, I saw with mild astonishment this scholar produce from the inner folds of this garment of an ancient Egyptian priest a packet of cigarettes. It was as if the statue of Olympian Zeus had suddenly come to life to offer me a smoke. But in the darkness of the Bengal station, with its few lights, there was no such incongruity in this white and pleated priestly costume. It gave an air of ghostly solemnity to the whole proceedings.

We took a conveyance through Belapur with its small shops where, up to this late hour, the artisans plied their trade; and so on to Santiniketan, "the Abode of Peace", which we reached after lights-out. A hurricane lamp provided light for me in the room, which had been occupied by Gandhi, to which Khitish Roy led me. It was simply and tastefully decorated with large brass vessels, ornaments made locally, and with a bed built Indian-style. In the bathroom huge earthen tubs were half-filled with water for my ablutions.

I retired immediately but found the sun well up when I awoke. Outside were flowering trees, sal, palash, and others, the mauve-coloured flower of the beautiful jaquenander tree



like wistaria in hue, and bushes of a brilliant cerise. The whole place was a glory of colour. Here also were the chittim trees which Sir Rabindranath's father had admired so much, when he came to visit Lord Sinha, that he had decided to settle here and establish the first school. Here India dreamed of her future and new poetry was born and dream-pictures.

My lodge itself, I learned, which was placed in the grounds as separate and individual, with other such lodges a stone's throw away, was called *Odichi*, "the Rising of the Sun". Over the way was a two-room house called "Postscript", a simple lodge which Tagore had built for himself. The poet had a habit, if habit can be the word for spontaneity in action, of not remaining still but of moving on from one cell to another which took his fancy or which he decided to build. The last of these still contains the simple but well-chosen furniture which the poet had used, and the materials for the innumerable paintings, of a highly futuristic type, which this prolific genius struck off in his later years. I say "struck off", since his industry was prodigious and its variety immense. At the sight of this activity I was moved, too slow in production of poetry, to increase my own.

Although I visited the school of art, presided over by Nanda Lal Bose, and had twice seen exhibitions of Tagore's work as a painter, what perhaps chiefly impressed me was a painting of Tagore himself, I do not know by whom, which I admired as I lunched at a table decorated with the so-called "snake's-head" and other brilliant flowers. The flowers of India are, on the whole, few, except in the North-East. The brilliant scarlet hibiscus is imported; and almost every flower I saw crowding a Simla garden seemed to me to be an import by some nostalgic Briton. It is in flowering trees, above all the gold mohur, with its head of orange red, that India is supreme. It therefore gave me the more pleasure to see these table flowers appearing as a kind of offering before the poet's picture.

The poet's nephew not only asked me to speak in the evening but had arranged for me to see most thoroughly the whole of this experimental settlement, the farms, the school, the library of Eastern culture. He discussed with me his plans for a centre of Christian and Western culture as a memorial

to the saintly C. F. Andrews. As a storm blew up we sat on the balcony of the old house and talked, looking over to the chapel of the settlement where the students gather each morning for religious exercises according to the Brahmo-samaj version of Hinduism. This puritan reform, which began by aiming at a universal religion but ended with a Hindu revival, insists on the utmost simplicity, so that the inside of the glass-walled chapel was as void and swept as a mosque. I am frank to say that it reminded me rather, with its coloured glass, of being inside an old-fashioned Victorian conservatory for ferns and flowers. My interest was, however, aroused in the inscription over the gateway: "He is One without a second. All that you see is Sustained by His Delight." Again I noted the Hindu trinity: where Abelard wrote that the Father is Power, the Son is Wisdom, the Spirit is Charity, the Hindu writes Power, Knowledge, Bliss.

I talked with Dr. George from Travancore who was seeking some synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity, and with the librarian, Dr. K. N. Sen, who told me of the wisdom of the poet Kabir. "What is the way to God?" they asked Kabir. "What way? There is no way to God, for to speak of a way implies division." "The fish in the water trust their element. Why not you?" Men debated in Kabir's presence concerning whether God was One, as said the Jews and Moslems, or also Three, as said the Christians and Hindus. "God, then," said Kabir, the great bridge-builder between Islam and Hinduism, "must have every quality and all power except the power to overcome the problem of number."

I listened to this with pleasure; but somehow I felt that the real issue was not so easy to settle. The way to God was not just a mystic denial that there was at all the separation that "a road" implied, for we are but too acutely conscious of the reality of this separation. I seek the higher *et deteriora sequor*. As a Westerner I was too much of a dualist not to feel the moral separation between God and man in my bones, even if I told myself that God transcended the all-too-human good. But that Kabir offered a promise of a road between Moslem and Hindu and pointed on in the quest to find the true core existing in all religion, however unequally revealed in each—of this I had no doubt.

That evening I spoke to the whole community, rows upon rows of figures in white, young men and women seated on the floor, in a hall called the Hall of the Temptation of Buddha, from the mural paintings that adorned the walls. I congratulated them upon their attempt to commemorate Andrews and to bring together Eastern and Western culture. I spoke of the great message of the Mahatma and of the moral and religious challenge that it issued to the West, the challenge which had brought me to India. And I spoke of the possibility, the possibility to which Jacques Maritain refers, that we may detect a core of truth not only in every religion but common to all religions, a core about which men of insight would be prepared to agree, a St. Francis and a Kabir, a Maritain and a Tagore. It was not at all impossible. It implied only the unity of the *visio Dei*, the intuitive vision of the Divine Beauty.

## CHAPTER XXVII

TWO DAYS after returning from Santiniketan I left Calcutta for Delhi. I went over the low wooded hills of Orissa and the flat Ganges plain. I arrived on the Saturday as the guest of the poetess of India, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, at the Asiatic Relations Conference over which she presided. On the Monday I was asked to lunch by India's outstanding Socialist leader, Jay Prakash Narain.

An enterprising Indian journalist who had learned where I was lunching not only accompanied me to my host's door but insisted upon coming inside on the pretext that he wished to interview me there and suggested that, if he sat quiet, he might remain at the private luncheon. However, this difficulty was surmounted and my host, Narain and myself sat down undisturbed.

No one has had a more remarkable career in recent Indian politics than this well-built, handsome man. I had spoken at the Labour College in Allahabad with which his name is connected and I had learned something about him. To capitalists and administrators he was a stormy petrel, a dangerous man who made wild and inflammatory speeches on the platform. Later on he went into the lands of his Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad, to address his subjects on labour questions, just as Jawaharlal Nehru went into the territory of the Maharaja of Kashmir. Like Nehru he was promptly expelled.

To others he seemed the expression of something inevitable and very desirable in Indian life. Hitherto the agitation in Indian life has been for political independence—that "the British quit". The economic issues that preoccupy the inhabitants of Europe and half Asia have not yet emerged into the forefront of Indian political life. If Europe has over-emphasized them to the point of being blind to major dangers not to be circumscribed within the field of economics, India has preferred to risk recurrent famine rather than to face them. To

face them would raise the population problem and the emigration problem in an acute form. It is no good preaching the raising of the workers' standards and still less the waging of the class war, where men live in family units, multiply to the limits foreseen by Malthus and are unable to emigrate whether into under-populated Soviet Southern Siberia or elsewhere. The divisions here in India are communal and vertical rather than class and economic divisions, save so far as caste provides them. What constitutes a community is at least made to appear to be religious unity, although indeed the issue is not so simple.

But already the situation is changing, and fast. Already Congress, if not as yet the Moslem League, is strained by divisions between different economic interests. The issue of Indian labour will take the foreground of the stage so soon as the issue of independence is out of the way. Jay Prakash Narain, with his Indian Socialist Party, represents the new India which will play the great role in the future.

On the record of his speeches Narain, one of the most dynamic leaders to-day in Indian political life, is not pro-British. In his conversation he is not pro-Russian. He is pro-Indian.

The mood of India is one of introspection, finding freedom in techniques of self-development. Indian definitions of freedom take this into account, not least those made by the Mahatma. The life of India is indeed built up upon the family and the holding together of all its members. But it has no background of state centralization and state authority such as Russia always had under the firm autocracy of the Czars, reinforced by the knouts of their Cossacks and police. So far as India has had any such experience at all it has been an experience of persistent resistance to this authority.

Narain visited Moscow. He did not like what he saw. The fight for liberty and the spy rule of the secret police were not easily felt to be consistent. He had no intention of extending the field, where the writ of the Kremlin runs, as far as Cape Cormorin or of being the Soviet tool.

Increasingly contemporary society, if it is to do justice by the workers, has to be a planned society. But planning in peace does not necessarily mean holding every human being totally at the disposition of the plan, totally the serf of the will

of a possibly irrational majority, as the Russians of the great plain were for centuries the serfs of the Czar and his lords, or at the will of the controlling minority of a clique of politicians. India also is dominated by the great Gangetic plain which has encouraged centralizing empires, but the Indian has never had the same feeling about the central ruler or overlord that the Russian had about the Autocrat of All the Russias or his successors. It is not the case that the state and the popular majority and the politicians' clique are always so rational that they merit abject worship. Short commons, emigration, starvation, death itself may be preferable to such servitude. It is here that such a lecturer as E. H. Carr, in his *Soviet Impact on the Western World*, seems to me so oddly and so mischievously wrong. At least India in its political subjection has always had its mental reservations as well as its national resistances.

The key to this demand for national efficiency, that runs beyond the social justice which will respect liberty, is a military key. It is the desire to turn human beings into efficient cogs in the great machine, in order that this modern and more evil holy car of Juggernaut may crush out, with the life of millions of its devotees, the life of all its opponents, may poison, blast and atomize them.

Its purpose may also be, if not more sinister, at least more sordid. Tyrannical men in power through all ages have feared criticism. Long ago, in his *Republic*, Plato analysed their souls. It has also through the ages been a maxim that to avert criticism it is well to call attention to enemies abroad and to point them out as the devils. When the people is occupied with fear and suspicion of foreign devils, the rulers and gun-men of society can save their own necks, the men upon whom otherwise vengeance would fall for having starved their millions of common folk.

I do not know whether these thoughts passed through Narain's mind as we sat at lunch. I do know that his desire was to learn about the British Trades Union movement and how to turn men trained as agitators in the field of Indian labour politics into organizers who could build up effective unions. I noted the implied compliment to the British way of life and to the British Labour movement. Indeed he had practical proposals of co-ordination to make.

When I left this house in Ferozshah Road I carried away the impression of a very able man with vision, able to cope with the great problem of India. That problem is the poverty of its people, a poverty due not only to industrial oppression but also to habitual low standards of demand and to a swollen and swelling population. Indeed full industrialization has not come yet. As it comes it breaks down the barrier of caste, but creates new problems of its own, even in the improved conditions provided by the Tatas and in the steel town of Jehangpur, but certainly in the evil mills of Bombay. It creates the problem of how India shall be industrialized without all the evils of industrialization for an Oriental population; how India shall be industrialized without Indians being shepherded like animals and losing even that liberty which the fakir preserves who sits by the roadside and contemplates his navel. One major problem indeed is to make her people ambitious to want more—more luxuries, more gadgets. The necessities of America are the luxuries of Europe, and the necessities of Europe in that hot clime are the luxuries of India. But India has never asked for riches. Her people, even when confined by caste and terrified by little despots, have always enjoyed the primitive liberty to keep their family life and, when the call came upon them, to wander, and to be pilgrims and hermits.

The social question must obviously be the next great problem of Indian life when the issue of national freedom and unity is disposed of. The social question is usually interpreted as one of a higher standard of living in terms of higher wages. But this will scarcely be feasible on any large scale so long as the population increases annually by the amount of the inhabitants of New York and so long as the family system persists whereby the rest of the family lives on the wage earner and they take their leisure, as the best commodity, under the Indian sun. Western civilization has hitherto been individualistic, and Christianity, succeeding late Hellenism, encourages this. But were India to abandon its family system without acquiring an individualism which is novel to it, the road would be prepared for a mighty centralized despotism contemptuous, even among Asiatic powers, of human life. It may be that the best hope in India is for a social change which, concentrating on nutrition and medical preventive care, raises the actual physical condition

of the people. Here and in agriculture is the cure, while adhering to the Mahatma's belief that freedom comes from the individual's use of choice.

Certainly it is no mere matter of minor interest but of decisive importance that Narain, this dynamic Socialist leader of which so much more will be heard, is concentrating on co-operatives and British-style unionism rather than bowing his head in the blood-spattered house of the Soviet Rimmon.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

ON THIS same day I had been asked to lunch with Jawaharlal Nehru; but it was metaphysically impossible to be in two places at once. Mr. Nehru, therefore, with the courtesy which always distinguishes him, invited me to be his guest on the following day, the first Tuesday of the Asiatic Relations Conference. Madame Shariar, the wife of the Premier of the new Indonesian Republic—herself, I conjectured, of Dutch ancestry—was a co-guest.

The Conference was the realization of Nehru's own dream. Delegates from over fifty nations had arrived, from places as far apart as Mongolia and Egypt, the Khirgiz Soviet Republic and Siam. The Chinese had arrived in great force. The Koreans were on their way.

During these two weeks of the Conference, despite all the responsibilities of the Indian situation, Mr. Nehru was constantly present, mothering his flock. For him the Conference had a significance far in excess of the detailed work on a variety of subjects, from agricultural and population research to cultural co-ordination, which it might do. It proclaimed to the world the fact of Asia, the unity of Asia, and the focal position alike of India in Asia and of Delhi in India. It was the first and one of the most triumphant gestures of the new and free India of which Nehru himself was the midwife.

Conversation at a party which included Nehru's own sister, the charming Mrs. Pandit, Mrs. Matthai, the wife of the able Minister who came from the Indian Christian community, and the editor of the *Aryan Path*, was necessarily general. I recall that one item was the architectural bad taste of one of the Hindu temples which the delegates were being invited to visit. Nehru himself is almost as handsome as a film star. When his picture appeared on the news reel, showing him mounted on the famous spotted horse which I remember in Simla (and which indeed anyone could hire), the audiences would break out into cheers. Had they known that he could,

at the age of fifty-eight, turn somersaults and stand on his head they might have been more impressed still, although anyone would be strangely at fault who thought this feat of Indian gymnastics indicated anything of the buffoon in Nehru. It did not even indicate that desirable *bonhomie* of the good fellow which A. V. Alexander showed so well.

It is difficult to see in Nehru, unless one has the discerning eye, the marks left by years of imprisonment for the cause of Indian independence. In over an hour's talk alone with him about Indian affairs and about that Declaration for the International Recognition of Indian Independence, suggesting a time limit to the British occupation, which I had drafted in 1943 and which Aneurin Bevan had signed, I found only the statesman of perfect courtesy, although not given to tolerating fools. It was the Vicereine who commented to me later upon how singularly little, compared with most mortals, the Indians who had suffered imprisonment seemed to show resentment about their confinement.

This certainly did not mean that a lasting impression had not been left upon this sensitive man, whose whole life had been fired with a great and patriotic purpose.<sup>1</sup> I felt that I detected this in a certain incapacity for small talk as his eye roved restlessly over his guests and one could almost see him calculating up the Conference arrangements for the afternoon. I felt it in a high strung and emotionally tense quality of his every gesture, a mixture of impatience and resignation. I was left wondering why a man, so burdened, went to the trouble of going through this social routine; but here I do not doubt that his political judgement was sound. To meet him was a major object for these assembled delegates, "Parthians, Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia", who had come from the four quarters of the earth and for whom he was the chief missionary—or the second missionary, for another admittedly had primacy—of the Indian idea.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Kashmiri Brahmin, is perhaps one of the most completely cultivated men whom I have ever met. He is a Harrovian, but his cultivation is not the product of the teachings of Harrow School, I am reasonably certain. It has

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Nehru: *The Discovery of India* (Meridian Press), 1946. Also *Nehru, your Neighbour*, ed. Tandon (Signet Press, Calcutta).

quite singularly little in common, in its style of greatness, with that of Winston Churchill. Nehru is among Indians Westernized. But he is not, therefore, "a Westerner". He has accepted changes of habit, not least of religious habit, from the West not in order to become less Indian but in order to become what he is, a very remarkable citizen of the world.

Nehru is a Brahmin rationalist—very much both. It was this quality which made him and his theories impossible for my orthodox Hindu friend, the Maharaja of Dholpur, to digest. All the appeals to Krishna and the organic nature of the world, the family and the state with its head, *pater patriae*, were wasted on Nehru. The Hindu Mahasabha or Orthodox Party cannot digest him. As a Brahmin he cannot be dismissed as negligible. But as one of the leading Indian statesmen he has led the National movement, in their view, onto the wrong lines. The orthodox Sardar Patel, the taciturn "boss" of Congress Party politics, is more to their taste, were it not that he happens to be organizing the other party. It is the alliance of characters so quite dissimilar as Patel, Nehru, and Gandhi which makes Congress, despite its occasional errors, so formidable.

After weeks spent in visiting temples and in considering the claims of demi-gods at Belur, of tantric yoga, of Sri Aurobindo, to talk with Nehru is to come up into the air and midday sun after diving through the deep waters of the twilight consciousness. His interests are those understood best in the West; his mentality even to its prejudices, without ceasing to be Indian, draws within hailing distance of the Hellenic consciousness. Nevertheless, while we spoke, and problems seemed capable of reduction to simple and rational elements, men in the streets of Lahore and Amritsar, even of Calcutta, Moslems and Hindus, were sharpening long knives, to stab each other in the narrow streets and on a dark night. Despite all rational hopes, Indian nationalism was to prove only to be a practicable thing after vast secessions.

Indian history is adorned by great periods of flowering such as took place under the Maurya emperors, including Asoka, under the Gupta emperors, and under the Moghuls, including Akbar. But, confused by the rise and fall of innumerable local dynasties and changing boundaries, it is not marked in bold outline by great conflicts of ideas and by their unfolding.

Except for the Chola empire and until the Moghuls, no shaping story of foreign relations stands out. Those with China and Persia are too desultory. There is no passionate defence of the city state as with Demosthenes, although there are merchant republics. There is no defence and expansion of imperial theory as with the great Roman jurists or with Dante. There is no historic drama of the church and the missions as with the Papacy and its challenge to the secular power. There is the early drama of Buddhism; but its impact is on philosophy rather than, despite Asoka, on political organizations. The philosophy of Europe is in its history; the history of India is in its philosophy. There is no rise of nationalism with the Rajputs or the Vijayanagar Empire equal to the story of nineteenth-century Europe, or to that of the Islam which is Leninism.<sup>1</sup> Even the impact of the first Islamic idea, that of Mohammed, is rather expressed in India by the unhappy Aurungzeb than by Akbar, the uniter.

It is no exaggeration to say that the idea in history, the idea as Hegel understood it, the idea for example of nationalism, has first come to be expressed in India by Congress, Western-inspired, and by a Westerner such as Nehru himself, along with Patel. We may dare to say that Nehru is the first Indian, and his All-Asia Conference at Delhi was the brilliant expression of his concept of the position of India. The peculiarity of this Indian idea lies in its combination of nationalism with internationalism and with a gospel of human conduct. This distinction it owes immediately to Nehru but ultimately to the essentially religious genius of India, the genius of the Mahatma.

<sup>1</sup> But *cf.*, K. M. Panikkar: *A Survey of Indian History* (National Information & Publications, Ltd., Bombay).

## CHAPTER XXIX

I WAS FORTUNATE enough, in the old Maidens Hotel at Old Delhi with its colonial atmosphere, to make the acquaintance of the Viceroy's private pilot. He proposed to go up to Simla. This was in April, 1946, a year before the other events of which I have told. The Simla Conference between the Cabinet Mission and the Indian leaders was still on. The Viceroy and leaders and members of the Mission adjourned to Simla from Delhi because of the great heat.

The pilot proposed, not to fly (for there is no landing ground in the Simla heights), but to go by car. He offered me a seat. We left Maidens about four o'clock in the morning, going through ruinous Indian villages in a country where all ruins decay and none are ever cleared away. The dawn came as we speeded over mile after dusty mile. At Ambala, the railhead of the Simla small-gauge line, we had an excellent breakfast and began the climb up through the Himalaya foothills. Two other cars carrying, we conjectured from various evidences, dignitaries of some kind, were just ahead of us. I subsequently discovered that these gentlemen were Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues. At the approach to Simla crowds were waiting to welcome him with garlands. We arrived in Simla, at the Hotel Cecil, just after two in the afternoon, having maintained a very respectable pace up from Delhi.

So high is Simla in the hills, with the vast expanse of ever-green-covered land beneath one, that one could not but notice the keenness of the air in one's nostrils, the exhilaration due to the altitude. Here, for decades, British officialdom has come with all its porters and coolies and subordinate officials in order to escape from the heat of the plains. It is a British creation, a veritable Cheltenham of the Indian hills, with teashops along its main street—where the ladies, Indian as well as British, drink tea at 11 a.m. precisely—and its social parties and its tennis lawns. These are among the outstanding contributions of England and Scotland to the civilization of

Mother India. Only partly incongruous is the Scottish laird's castle dominating the tree-tops at one end, which is the vice-roy's lodge. A local note is given by the coolie-pulled rickshaws, four coolies to a rickshaw, which travel at a run from one end of the long village to the other, bearing the richer visitors. The villas have aggressively English names such as "Grasmere" or "The Firs".

Only late at night and in the early morning does this colonial scene undergo transformation. After visiting a well-known Indian trades union leader I returned after dark in a rickshaw to my hotel. As the rickshaw boys sang their chant as they run, "Kai-yu, Kai-ya", and the silver bells tinkled a warning to wayfarers obstructing the way and the silver rickshaw lamps shed their slight yellow light on the fir trunks as we passed, still with a "Kai-yu, Kai-ya" from the silent footed runners, I might have been a returning paladin of the court of Haroun al Raschid, Haroun the Just, or of Akbar the Great or of that emperor Aladdin Khiljis who actually ruled in India. Below, far, far below, one saw the pin-point lights of bungalows in the woods on the approaches to the Simla heights.

However, on the afternoon of my arrival, I had little time to explore the beauties and curiosities of Simla. By four of the same afternoon I had received a message inviting me to call within an hour upon Maulana Azad, President of Congress at that time and its most outstanding Moslem leader. Mr. Jinnah, I recalled, was once a member of Congress as were many other Moslems.

In a villa not many hundred yards from my hotel I met the President. My friend Humayun Kabir acted as interpreter since, unlike almost all other Indian leaders who have a far better command of English than of most Indian languages, the Maulana preferred to use Hindustani.

He began by asking my opinion on matters connected with the Conference and I replied that, as an outsider, I did not presume to intrude my views. This seemed to be the right reply, for the bearded kindly man warmed to me. He assured me that I was sufficiently well known in India, and my stand for the freedom of India sufficiently well known in his judgment, for me to be fully entitled to express my views. He knew that I had an uncompromising belief in the application

of George Canning's great policy to Asia—in the encouragement of Asiatic nationalism.

This gave me a legitimate opening to repeat to him the views that I had already expressed, on a similar invitation, to Bose in Delhi. What mattered was the substance of power and not the words. What mattered was whether the people really wanted Pakistan, with all the costs of taxation and economic difficulties which this would involve, and not whether this or that section chose to call itself sovereign in law. The state of Texas, the States of the American Union, still called themselves sovereign and were so in American law within the greater sovereignty of the Union. But this did not affect the substantial fact that the Union had four-fifths of the power. Nor did it matter whether parts came together by a treaty or otherwise. The solidity of the structure of Great Britain was unimpaired although based upon a treaty between England and Scotland. An impassioned dispute concerning whether Pakistan might or might not be sovereign was not worth engaging upon. What mattered was whether or whether not there was going to be a central government and, not least, a strong judiciary competent to interpret an All-India written Constitution, just as John Marshall interpreted that of the United States.

Nor again did it seem worth while to dispute the list of powers to be transferred to the centre enumerated by the Cabinet Mission. It was a mistake to anticipate the developments, and especially the inevitable developments, of history. If the Hindus were right in their economic arguments, then the future could well take care of itself on the assumption that (as in the American Union) the first steps were rightly taken. What mattered was the interpretation of the Constitution and the interpretation of the powers. The powers of defence and foreign affairs, which the central government was to hold, involved by implication the right of direct taxation and the power of the purse. What mattered was this—and communications, water communications. Communications by river, as one saw from the American interpretation of the Constitutional powers under which the Tennessee Valley Administration was set up, involved the right of control of the water way, setting up dams, irrigation and electrification. It meant electricity and

bread for the masses, just as the harnessing of the Yangtze could mean this in China.

Azad listened attentively to my comments and thanked me. He asked me to reduce them to writing. I was later informed that they had been circulated to the Working Committee of Congress as they were also to the Cabinet Mission members.

While I was in Simla my friend Mrs. Shukla Lal Das took me round to where the Jinnahs were staying. Their temporary residence while in Simla was indistinguishable in so many ways from many a residence in the English Lake District, perched up in the hills. It had some such name as a Lake District house might be expected to have. I cannot recall it now but I recall how English it was. There on that May afternoon we took tea with the elegant and tall Miss Jinnah who in so many ways was indistinguishable from any English hostess of high society. We discussed, I recall, the beauties of their house when they had lived in England, and indeed in Hampstead.

It was several mornings after I had arrived in Simla before the physical atmosphere cleared with some change of wind. The political atmosphere never fully cleared. I walked out of my hotel across the main street and stood by the low wall beyond which the ground dropped away steeply from the knife edge on which Simla town is built. And there, on the horizon, like banked rosy clouds, I saw a sight unmistakable and unforgettable—the vast stretch of the Higher Himalayas, snow-clad, and the gateway into the land of the Thousand Buddhas, the forbidden land of Tibet.



## CHAPTER XXX

BACK IN Delhi I received an invitation to lunch from Mr. G. D. Birla. I had already met J. R. D. Tata and other directors of the immense Tata concern. Personally wealthier, Mr. Birla's financial interests were only slightly less important than those of the Tata group itself. He is one of the wealthiest men after the Nizam in India, and indeed in the world, and the embodiment of Indian capitalism. He is also, however, a very religious Hindu, upon whose outlook, in these last years, the Mahatma had great influence.

I arrived at his palatial residence about one o'clock, with the Indian sun beating down on carefully watered flower beds, and entered the magnificent marble atrium or entrance hall of the house. Tall, thin and what is called "intellectual", Mr. Birla came to greet me. The table was excellently served by attendants in white with their striking sashes.

I could not help noticing that, next door to this dining-room and communicating with it, was a room of equivalent size, decorated and draped in red, with very low stools, a few inches above the floor, also of red. Several figures, as I thought, of Hindu gods were placed against the walls. Largely in order to make conversation I enquired whether the room was a private chapel. I knew Mr. Birla as the donor of the large new orthodox Hindu temple in Delhi. However he assured me that what I had thought was a chapel was indeed only his Indian style dining-room.

I found Mr. Birla to be, if a capitalist whose Bombay mills are cited as the location of the next great industrial revolt in India, also a nationalist and an idealist in his nationalism. The Marxist denunciation of capitalism, not without force in a country on the threshold of industrialization, would yet have been meaningless at this stage of Indian history when the first issue was the right to self-government, which has been held by a prime minister of England to be superior to good government. The Indian people, Mr. Birla told me, are proud.

During the war they had assisted the West with their resources. It was not for them, when famine came, to go around, cap in hand, begging from the European peoples for a little grain or rice. India knew better than the West how to draw its belt tight, how to starve. He did not add the unspoken corollary: nor must the West come asking for food from India.

Although there might be a certain incongruity in Dives saying, in his palace, that Lazarus knew how to starve, the incongruity at the time did not strike me. Talking with Mr. Birla I had no shadow of doubt that, had he been arrested for non-co-operation, he would have known how to go on hunger strike as well as any. I neither doubted the integrity of his Indian nationalism nor the sincerity of his statement that, so soon as the issue of Indian independence was settled, India would bear no ill-will and that old scores would be forgotten.

I could only point out to Mr. Birla that Britain had not been too proud to ask for aid from America under conditions less acute than those of famine, so that India need not feel an appeal for her distressed areas to be undignified. I recalled that, in the midst of acute famine in Republican Spain during the civil war, the then Spanish Ambassador in London had told me in my own house that the Spaniards were not Armenians to beg for aid. But, since it so happened that no aid was forthcoming, the Republican cause through Spanish pride was lost . . .

In Travancore I had another experience of a meal, a dinner, in India—a more average experience. I had passed, on my way south, through Nagpur. My host there had sought to introduce me to the members of the Provincial Cabinet and I had met the very distinguished premier. Several other members of the Cabinet had gone to the local cinema. The following day I went there myself. It was a very up-to-date, air-conditioned, American-style cinema. *Doll Face* was showing, featuring Carmen Miranda. In the interval, topical tunes were played, beginning with "Deep in the Heart of Texas". When the show was over I came out into the main street of Nagpur. Texas and America and Carmen Miranda were left behind. Above were the large stars of the Indian zenith. The air was hot with the Indian summer. The bullock carts creaked by, with their drivers seated upon the backs of the bullocks or cross-legged in

their carts. The peasants returned to eat their food on the floor of their mud-huts. And beyond, amid the grass and stones of the jungle, the snakes crawled to their holes and the wild things went out hunting.

India is full of such violent contrasts, where a superficial West impinges on the still unchanged East.

Arrived in Travancore I was to have direct experience of taking a meal, not in any peasant's hut indeed, but in a middle-class Indian home. My host had arranged that the meal should be Indian style. The ladies of his household were too shy to join us, so we dined alone. We sat on the floor and a variety of dishes, so hotly spiced that I had difficulty in eating them, were brought all at the same time. Helpings were placed on different portions of a large plantain or banana leaf and we ate them, sweet and savoury together, with our fingers.

The only European element was introduced by a couple of glass bottles with metal stoppers, such as one may purchase at a soda fountain, containing fruit drinks. Afterwards we sat in the light of a single unscreened electric bulb and talked about politics and civilization.

The lunch in Mr. Birla's palace, the European-style feasting in Maharajas' palaces were quite deceptive. This was not how India lived. For the most part India slept on the floor or on a low cord-woven bed in the open; cooked on the floor; ate on the floor. It was a civilization on the floor, the earth floor or at best that of polished cow-dung. Its physical needs and motives for ambition and gain were small. It followed an immemorial routine of living. It thought. Or it mated. Neither cost much. The poison of ambition for power had not deeply entered in. And if Indian courts and merchants' houses knew great luxury, lesser men did not expect to compete.

As I travelled by car along the great roads of India and passed one crumbling village after another, built of a mud or adobe that could scarcely last for a generation, patched and ruinous, I began to reflect how much civilization owed to the great builders, ambitious men who built for all time. In India all man needs in that climate is literally a roof above his head, something that can act as a parasol and umbrella. Everything else can be dispensed with. Even the great imperial cities of India such as Pataliputra were built of wood and have passed

away, almost without trace. What point is there in privacy in a village or in permanency when life has, for so many, no cultivation beyond the simplest acts of cooking and feeding? Here is the simple life. Why should it need a Pharaoh by slave labour to raise a pyramid? Only the temples and a few palaces outlast a generation or two, and even in India there are not so many of these.

Civilization, as the material body of culture, is the product of those who have considerable needs and who increase their needs. Mr. Birla, it may be, hopes that the Indian peasant will want more. At present, except for a loin cloth, he has little need for Mr. Birla, for capitalism, for production, for Western gadgets. The problem of India is not the poverty of its masses, so that they cannot pay, but the lowness of its standard of demand so that no need is seen to earn and there is, in that hot land, no ambition. One member of the family will earn enough to keep the pot boiling and the rest, while he is in employment, will live on him. This is called "the family system".

How shall India get off the ground? Or is it even desirable that it should? Is this only a Western prejudice in favour of a sophistication that has no connection with happiness, and against the simple life?

Is it that the West traces its notion of civilization from the wisdom of the Egyptians and from the Pharaohs who got up from the ground; and sat on thrones staring out over the Nile flood, mastered in its power by their power; and built for all ages: or from the practical Phoenician traders—whereas Indian civilization traces from the Dravidian nature worshipper, who accepted nature and Priapus, and from the Buddha, who offered an escape from the weariness of fertility worship in contemplation and Nirvana and another reconciliation with That-such-as-it-is? Vishvanath and the Buddha, here, are opposites. But the Pharaoh is something other than both, a power symbol in contrast to both. Like Vishvanath, the Pharaoh, the living Osiris, represents energy, but he represents an eternal sexless power that holds control. He represents not the Kali-worship of Time accepted, but represents Time dominated. Like Buddha, with his symbols of asp and sphinx, he is primarily sexless, but he represents not contemplation of the neuter

eternal but power to conquer time by the idea and nature by the idea, and to control. Even the Nile, by serving her and by knowledge of her seasons, could be used by Pharaoh's engineers. And the Pharaoh-image is the ideal image of Western man, from which the priest-image and the Caesar-image and the science-image derive.

Is it, then, that earth-bound Bacchic India too much lacks the Idea, the clear Apollonian idea, the idea of power and ambition and the word of power? Or is India fortunate in this lack, happy in here having no history but only a philosophic tradition independent of time?

Most, but not indeed all, Indians who can afford to get off the ground do so. That is significant. Mahatma Gandhi, however, does not get off the ground. Mr. Birla has his own compromise: two dining-rooms. To get off the ground is a symbol—a symbol of building, of increased demand, of ambition, of building the tower of Babel, of copying the towers of Manhattan. At the moment India seems to prefer eating with one's fingers from a plantain leaf. Or is it only that India pours annually from her over-fertile womb so many millions of human beings that always the labour market is and will be saturated, always the wages are too low for a popular high-standard civilization unless this is provided by some benevolent despotism? But what, then, is a high-standard civilization? *Doll Face?* Carmen Miranda? Or M. K. Gandhi? And who shall look for a benevolent despotism in this Age of the Malevolent Despots?

## CHAPTER XXXI

THE WORK of the Asiatic Relations Conference of March, 1947, was diversified by an opportunity of seeing the monuments of ancient Delhi. I have a rooted objection to the routine viewing of monuments and to being conducted by guides. However, one monument I had decided in my own mind I wished to see under whatever the conditions were that might present themselves. That monument was the Tomb of Humayun.

Humayun was a student of the stars, astrologer and astronomer. Humayun also was an emperor, the second of the Moghul Emperors, the son of the Emperor Babar and the father of Akbar. Tradition says that he tumbled through life and tumbled into death, for he broke his neck as he, this scholar prince, descended the library stairs over in the old Moghul palace. The tomb was built by his wife, Hamida Buno Begum, the mother of Akbar.

Here, as our guide did not fail to tell us, the soldiers of the East India Company pursued the unhappy brothers of the last Moghul Emperor, who had taken sanctuary in the tombs of their ancestors in 1857, in the year of the "Mutiny". These kinsmen of the lawful rulers of India were caught here where they had hidden; were taken out; and were shot. This, in those days, was the way of the Occidental with the Oriental. With a nauseating sanctimoniousness this conduct was justified as a punishment for Oriental perfidy. The last of the Moghuls died, a British prisoner of state, in Singapore. However, it is perhaps best to say no more since the Twentieth Century, this new Age of the Tyrants, has assuredly no right, amid its tortures, to sit in judgement on the Nineteenth Century. Perhaps the only comment is that at least the Moghuls themselves had taken this Hindu land by violence and that neither side, in the days of this rising, were guiltless of actions that do not bear justification.

We passed through the red stone gateway, past the ornamental pools which are one of the chief charms of Indian architectural planning, and up towards the steps of the platform.

Above the great square platform rises, almost like the Mosque of Omar in Jerusalem, the huge dome of the mausoleum. All is in red sandstone, save here and there the alabaster tombs, curiously carved with subtle workmanship, of the Moghul princes. Above the main arch of the entrance I saw familiar symbols, this time the Star of David which in India one so often sees—incongruously to Western eyes—placed next to the equally ancient and equally Indian swastika. Dr. Goebbels, when he was a university student in Hyderabad, learned to appreciate the one but not the other.

From the upper galleries of this great august place one could see the whole Delhi plain, the Old Fort and the Red Fort, and the line of sands and water of the great Jumna river. The sounds of the tourists and of their guide, a charming Hungarian kinswoman by marriage of Jawaharlal Nehru, disappeared. I remained for a while by myself. The heat shimmered over the land. The history of India which, when conquered, yet conquers and appropriates stood in monumental form around me.

Faust had always been in quest. I found myself reviewing my own life. Why was I in India? Because I thought that the Mahatma might have the clue, in the labyrinth of politics, to those problems which the politicians of the West, so clearly plunging towards barbarism and back into the Dark Ages of human torture and violence, were unable to solve—so clearly moving towards a third war amid their very efforts, or their doctrinal protestations of their desire, to preserve peace. The question was whether the Mahatma was a greater realist, a more successful politician than were Hitler and Stalin, Churchill and Truman. But there was also another reason.

The quest was for more than a political clue, important although this was. What less should one seek than what Goethe always sought: a right judgement on ways of life? And the disciples of the Indian ways of life came challenging the Occidental to a comparison and asserting, although without the dogmatism of the morose dictatorship of the North, their own superiority. Was the West right? Was the Land of the Seven Million slaves right?<sup>1</sup> Or was India right—and which India?

<sup>1</sup> D. J. Dallin: *Forced Labour in the U.S.S.R.* I have cut down Dallin's figure by over fifty per cent in order to be on the more charitable side.

There were poems which I wished to write. There were many things that I wished to do. But first I wanted to settle my own mind on these matters.

As I looked out over the red parapets and up to the dome of the tomb of the Moghul, I could not help reflecting that it was an alien culture that had built this, the most beautiful building in Delhi, one of the most beautiful buildings in India. It was despite so many Indian influences, like the Taj, a Moslem building. It owed perhaps its proportions and certainly its tranquillity to that fact. It manifested the truth of God in the harmony of beauty, the abstract ancient norms, whereas Hindu structures manifested the teeming quality of life, like live creatures in a pond or jungle, the active concrete, the dynamism of the natural energy. Even the statues of Brahmā the Eternal Creator, the expression or person of Brahm, had no message of peace. Perhaps the Hindu contemplative turned away from temples as the Moslem contemplative did not turn away from mosques. The best values of Brahminism were not to be found in its temples. If so, here was yet another demonstration of the astounding Hindu divorce between popular and contemplative religion, and of the doctrine of "beyond good and evil" which permitted this divorce and asked no more than a certain symbolic truth in the popular forms, with their abundance of taboos and rituals.

It was a mere presumptuousness to "condemn" Hinduism. Hinduism indeed had contributed far more to the culture of India and its art than Islam. The question was whether one should adopt it as the American scholar had adopted Buddhism, or how one should relate oneself to it. It was not correct to say that it had no world mission, for the modern movements such as that of Ramakrishna sent out missionaries and demanded of their neophytes an elaborate discipline in meditation. I knew enough of the tantric discipline with its ridiculous air suckings and water suckings, and primitive medicine through muscular gymnastics and control, to repudiate at least this discipline. The end of it might give rise to magic claims of spiritual superiority, as of some Siberian Rasputinesque shamans; but it bore no fruit (despite claims to work miracles) in the charity which is the fruit of true religion, or in moral superiority and understanding of the subtleties of living, or



in the mental control that can master physical and human nature.

The Upanishads, the Vedanta—here was a measure of truth which deserved acknowledgement, even if the recognition of the godhead in man ended with an arrogancy about the godhead of men which was a mischief and a folly. But in Islam there was a manifested truth which came nearer to that for which I was in quest. The Iranian tribes from which Babar came, and from which he drew his warriors, were not Indian and were not philosophers. Perhaps the better vision was nearer home than I had supposed, among those who were not Indian but were philosophers. One should not, over-impressed by novelty, underestimate the contribution of the West and of the Middle East—of Egypt, Judaea and Greece. But such a conclusion was too flattering to the pride of a West which showed so many signs of bankruptcy, to be lightly accepted.

Whitehead, in his *Adventures of Ideas*, well shows that the tradition of Islam is that of a world regulated by an imposed law, the imposed will of Allah which provides order for the universe. The philosophy of Buddhism—and Professor Whitehead could have added, of Brahmin Hinduism—is that of an immanent law. In the case of Brahminism at least, it is a philosophy of an immanent deity indwelling pantheistically in the universe because it alone is the reality sustaining the universe.

Clearly this notion of God Immanent cannot be rejected out of hand in the name of Allah, the Transcendent Creator. Even Mohammedanism does not insist on this, according to Shiite doctrine. All the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation in the world repudiates such a rejection. “Et incarnatus est de Spiritu sancto ex Maria Virgine”. And the Brahmin doctrine of a “sustaining God”, Brahm the Sustainer, who must therefore be more than solely immanent in the perceived universe, comes half-way across to meet the Christian doctrine of the transcendent Being who yet sends his Reason, Logos and Christ into the World. Christianity is not just a gospel of the good man Jesus-ben-Miriam who claimed he was a god. It is a doctrine, like Brahminism, of the Trinity and, unlike Brahminism, a doctrine of the rational Logos and the moving Spirit, not only of Nature the Creator and of Nature the Destroyer. It has a Greek stress on immanent Reason which

Hinduism and Judaism alike lack, a gospel (according to St. John) of the Idea unfolding itself and justifying permanent values. One of the results of the cult of Jesus in nineteenth-century Christianity, when put into opposition—into a semi-Arian opposition—to the cult of the Christ, has been to obscure such a Johannine vision of underlying dialectic truth in creation and history. Most Protestants are semi-Arians; and Unitarians, of course, are avowedly fully Arian and more than Arian. They tend to ignore, rather than repudiate, the Johannine Gospel which brings Christianity closest to Brahminism.

The Brahmin, in turn, with his emphasis on the divine which is beyond good and evil, goes far to obscure that divine warfare between good and evil which Islam recognizes so well. Nevertheless every mystic will seek to establish relation between the apparent and the real, the fleeting and the eternal, the ego and the Godhead which relation is impossible with a Godhead exclusively transcendent. Pure transcendence he must repudiate, and the mystics even of Islam and of Jewry have repudiated it. Brahminism is the monistic religion of immanence and of the acceptance of our world as “really” divine even in its most “natural” and even animal manifestations, the world in all its variety. It leads to passivity. Islam is the dualistic religion of transcendence and of the conquest of an imperfect world, if need be actively by the sword, in the name of the transcendent moral will of Allah. It leads to intolerance. The problem was to embrace both truths so far as they were true—to keep both the mystic and the moral sense.

## CHAPTER XXXII

As I LOOKED out from the balcony of Humayun's Tomb over the scorched plain I continued my disconnected reflections. Only those who have tidy finished minds can organize, at the beginning of a quest, the conclusions which they should reach at the end. And as I write this I develop, thanks to all of several months of thinking, what I then thought.

The great problem of religion for the common man was not the mystic intuition of the few seers and prophets; nor the metaphysical or psychological problem of the Vedanta, whether man here and now could enter into relation with a transcendent deity—nor, anyhow, what was the nature of this created universe, made out of nothing, over against which the Creator stood. It was not whether the Moslem image of the Almighty Potter was not too simple and the theology of the Vedanta nearer the mystic truth; or whether the Vedanta did not destroy ethically the value alike of the individual soul and of its tragic struggle against evil. It was something different and yet not so remote. It was how far the principles of good and evil upheld by religions, even by Brahmin ritual and tabus, whether or not they were eternal principles, connected with the actual living and daily conduct of human life; or how far they were remote ethical abstractions and empty generalities or rationalizations of magic superstitions. How far do the men of rule and principles know how to live, day by day—and yet not ignobly or insignificantly when it comes to the more far-reaching decisions?

Mr. Gandhi, the greatest of contemporary Indian figures, seemed to have, I thought, an answer to give which appealed to the common man in an age of crisis and chaos. By all the evidence he seemed to be a most successful politician who achieved, without the sword and blood, what Hitler and Stalin waded through the blood of millions to achieve less successfully. In a world where fascism, communism, democracy (which no two people would define in the same way) were the catchwords,

with war for civilization and for and against God, the Mahatma came alone with a practical suggestion: that the way to end war was to abstain from it, and to eradicate the psychological roots of it. The way which demonstrated practical religion and goodwill and brought down the words "mystic love of God" and "holy charity" from the clouds was *ahimsa*, non-violence, as an active policy, along with self-discipline, re-education of the inner man and devotion of the whole personality to truth. Was it indeed all so simple or was there some catch? And was the Mahatma more than a clever politician. Or was he more than just another of India's many holy men? Or was he only, as the Marxists thought, an exhibitionist *fakir*, a diversionist?

Was there here a practical message of the East to the West? Was there an intellectual, a philosophical message? There was no doubt in Faust's mind that the West waited, in fear of deception, in hope of good news, for such a message. Was the Mahatma a well intentioned deceiver or a pioneer with the insight of genius? And further: even if his message applied under Indian conditions, would it apply under world condition?

I took the road back again, down the red stone steps, past the still pools, and along the way towards Delhi, the imperial city of the Moghuls. Here the party awaited me, having looked at other tombs. We had one further engagement before returning to Delhi. It was to be the guest of the hereditary custodian of the shrine of the Mussulman saint Nizamuddin.

The scene was one worthy of the East of Aladdin. We were greeted by the custodian or, as he called himself, "head priest", the Pir Zamin Nizam, in person. He was a tall, handsome figure in a black silk robe adorned with silver decorations, and was crowned with a vast black and white silk turban which rose to a point. In his hand he carried a four-foot walking-stick knobbed and tipped with silver. He welcomed a dozen of us to his house, where what could appropriately be called a repast of fruits and sweetmeats was laid out, a little interfered with by a scourge of flies. We looked out over his domestic courtyard which contained the graves of his ancestors, the preceding hereditary guardians. He discussed over the table a later feast when we would be welcomed by distinctive musicians and dancers. Meanwhile his servitors stood with vast fans and,

as in the courts of four millennia ago, waved away the midges.

The repast over we proceeded, past the simple tomb of the poet Ghalib, to visit the shrine of the saint. The saint had obviously been temperamental, a man not easy to please. The Sultan of Delhi of his day had built for him, in his lifetime too, a tomb in the traditional style of a red-stone mosque. But the holy man had found it too vast and bare, and not to his taste. So, near his holy well, another tomb had been built, small, of catafalque shape, but exquisite with inlaid mosaic. Here Nizamuddin slept, it is to be hoped, content.

Pilgrims from even as far as Egypt came to visit the shrine. Others were not lacking who had come to collect their alms. However, as the Pir advanced, although he was escorting even infidel guests, all deferentially stood aside. Porticoes protected one from the beating heat of the Indian sun. Beyond, more in Hindu than in Moslem style, was a pool for ablutions, a holy spring of the saint probably of Hindu origin, which fable said had been dug so deep by spirits in a single night when the holy man had been challenged to display his power. After this demonstration of magic all critics and sceptics had been dumbfounded, and the saint had taken peaceful possession. The saint obviously had lived in a world where what was demanded of him was signs and wonders. What this generation had sought it had also found; and the name of Nizamuddin is perpetuated to the days of his children's children as much as that of Ghalib, the poet.

The Pir was himself a remarkable man and I observed later that, in the All-Nations Conference at Delhi, he commanded a prominent place. I don't think that his contribution to religion is remarkable. But he provides colour and stimulus to human imagination and, I do not doubt, deserves himself, in time to come, a tomb of fine mosaic and cunning craftsmanship. For the present, as a guest, I pray that Allah may lengthen his days. However, I wondered for a moment how far, in the Indian scene, the Mahatma might differ from the Pir.

## PART II

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## CHAPTER XXXIII

WHEN I returned to my quarters in Delhi, I picked up the small book with which I had been presented by the Gandhiist worker, my friend Ghosh, in Benares. It was the book *Hind Swaraj* or *Indian Home Rule*, by M.K. Gandhi. It was, perhaps, an unlikely quarter in which to look for anything more than the propaganda of the politicians. But I was not to be disappointed. Lord Lothian was quite right when he told me that "all Gandhism" was to be found in this book.

Why should a book on Home Rule be a bible of moral counsel, and the preaching of a religious crusade? What kind of a man is the author of such a book and why, the Westerner wonders, did he come to write it? Let me endeavour to explain.

In 1869, on the 2nd October, in Porbandar was born Mohandas K. Gandhi, the youngest of six children of a member of the merchant or *bania* caste. His father, Karamchand Gandhi, was later prime minister of Rajkot State; and his grandfather was premier or *diwan* of Porbandar, in that great peninsula of Gujerat which lies between Sindh and Bombay and which has its own language and customs. The position is not so much to be compared with the prime minister of some contemporary Western government as with the chief minister of state of some German princely court in the Eighteenth Century, such as was Goethe himself in Weimar. M. K. Gandhi, in brief, was born of a higher social rank than most of the Europeans whom he met.

Despite his filial and very Indian devotion to his father which, as appears from his *Autobiography*,<sup>1</sup> was not in every case shared by his children, the decisive influences upon his life were probably his mother, Putlibai, and his no less pious nurse who early taught him Hindu hymns. Much emphasis has been placed by M. K. Gandhi's Brahmin critics upon the

<sup>1</sup> M. K. Gandhi: *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1927).



fact that, although his mother was a Vaishnava Hindu, she came much under the influence of a Jain monk after her husband's death.

Jainism is an ascetic religion, with fewer adherents in India than Christianity. It arose in the Sixth or late Seventh Century, B.C., about the time of the Buddha, in that North-East India where Buddhism arose, and had, like Buddhism, its greatest influence in South India—and also in Gujerat. The last of its great prophets, in the Sixth Century before Christ, was Mahavira. It taught, instead of the sacrifice of bulls and goats (and human sacrifice), a more pleasing self-sacrifice, taken fairly literally as mortification, coupled with non-violence and respect for all life that breathes, animal and human.

This Jain influence, as we shall see, is probably over-emphasized. Nevertheless a connection is clear between M. K. Gandhi's position and that of these ascetics and temple builders who carried to the furthest extreme, in their revolt against the dead letter of the Brahmin law, the living principle of respect for life, animal as well as human. Especially is this true of Gandhi's philosophy of *ahimsa* or non-violence, although it is also to be found in Hinduism and, far more explicitly, in Buddhism. The *Jainas* had been persecuted in the past by the Brahmins; and the Mahatma, who protested himself to be an orthodox Hindu, must none the less have grown up in an atmosphere in which it was thought possible and even laudable to oppose Brahminism, and popular Hindu religion too, in the name of some "better way".

The small boy, although intelligent, was shy and bashful to a fault. Along with this self-diffidence, however, went a singular and pertinacious obstinacy which was to be a life-long characteristic, especially if a principle were involved. He recalls, in his *Autobiography*, one incident at school when having mis-spelled a word during a visit of the British inspector of schools, he declined to correct the error by copying from his neighbour, even when the embarrassed schoolmaster, on edge because of the public failure of his pupil, gave a clear hint to him that he should do so. The boy was not so much a prig as single-minded. It did not occur to him to see the hint. There has, however, always been enough of the prig in Mr.

Gandhi, as in most of the saints, to make him what it is now popular to call, in terms of dispraisal, a "perfectionist".

Before long we find record of petty pilferings, detailed in the *Autobiography* with the same emphasis that Augustine made record of his misdemeanours in the *Confessions*, and record of the graver offences of smoking cigarettes and, crime of crimes, eating meat, cow's flesh indeed (but chiefly goat). These privy orgies of cannibalism, six in all, clearly weighed heavily on his conscience and prejudiced him later in favour of taking vows of abstention. Nowhere in India was there stronger feeling against meat-eating, or more Jain influence, than in Gujarat. In his early 'teens, Gandhi was misled in this matter by a reprobate friend of an elder brother, on the ground that, if Indians ate meat and were strong, they could throw out the British. The same friend thrust Mohandas into a brothel and paid the bill; but both parties directly involved were too startled for any harm to come of it. His mother warned him against his friend; but he told her that he went with him in order to reform him.

About this experience of school-boy friendship the Mahatma makes one very interesting observation which instantly sets him apart from "good fellows" the world over. It shews him as having that slightly aloof character which distinguishes the saints and irritates common men with them. The saints are usually more aristocrats than good democrats. "A reformer," Gandhi writes, "cannot afford to have close intimacy with him whom he seeks to reform. True friendship is an identity of souls rarely to be found in this world. Only between like natures can friendship be altogether worthy and enduring. Friends react on one another. Hence in friendship there is very little scope for reform. I am of the opinion that all exclusive intimacies are to be avoided; for man takes to vice far more readily than to virtue. And he who would be friends with God must remain alone, or make the whole world his friend."

Gandhi's "love" then, is untinged with any of the delusions of easy *bonhomie*. It is, in accordance with the strict Christian theology of love, not so much an emotion as an intellectual attitude of the will, a benevolence to man springing from the love of the good or of God, which does not interfere with "the

flight of the alone", or relieve men of purpose of their necessary loneliness and even "tough" persistence against social disapproval. No one can be further from sentimentality than the Mahatma or have based his benevolence less upon illusions about human nature.

Two other incidents did much to fix the Mahatma's character in childhood. Few things influence a child more, although adults forget this, than his early reading or the plays he has seen. An Indian play, *Harishchandra*, had as its hero a youth dedicated to telling the precise truth. Not one but many times the Father of another country than that of George Washington saw or acted out at home this morality play. One reason for abandoning meat-eating (and brothels) was that these things could not be done in Gujerat or Kathiawad without deception and telling lies.

Not less morally important to the young Gandhi seemed to be devotion to parents. "I learned to carry out the orders of elders, and not to scan their actions." Mohandas was married before he was sixteen to his wife of a life-time, Kasturbai. His father had ordered it, largely in order to have a triple marriage of Mohandas, his elder brother and a cousin all at one time, gain *éclat* and save expense. Mohandas spent the time with his wife on the night when he should have been nursing his father—on the night that his father died. It is not far-fetched to see Gandhi's whole attitude towards celibacy determined by this child marriage and by his shame and dismay on reflecting on his unnecessary absence, as a devoted son, from his father's death-bed. At least we may say with confidence that these early experiences together, all pointing towards the control of the passions, even when they appeared superficially most harmless, moulded the man.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

AFTER the death of their father, the Gandhi family was not rich, and Mohandas, having matriculated, went to Samaldas College in Bhavnagar, which was less expensive than the more fashionable Bombay. Even so, the raw young provincial found himself so bewildered that he derived little profit. He could arouse in himself no interest in the professors' lectures. The result was one of those many reverses in Mr. Gandhi's career, which might have permanently placed among the "also ran" any one of less obstinate determination.

The element of good luck also entered in now, as well as that of sturdy, knotty character. The family had an old friend and adviser, a Brahmin. He suggested that the young man ought to aspire to the high official post of his father and grandfather; but that, since times were changing and getting harder every day for men who were members of large families, it would be wiser to get an English education *à épater les bourgeois*, rather than resume studies in an Indian college. "My son Kelvalram says it is very easy to become a barrister, in England", remarked the Brahmin mentor. Gandhi's loyal elder brother, a man devoid of jealousy and one of his staunchest supports in youth, was all in favour of this venture. An uncle, not without his doubts whether a man might not lose his religion in London, yet declined to oppose the scheme. Everything must depend upon the decision of Mohandas' mother, always so great an influence in his life. She, herself, turned for advice to a Jain monk. His comment was: "I shall get the boy to take the three vows"—to abstain from wine, meat and women—"and then he can go". And so it was decided, although to pay for the voyage involved the sale of some of his wife's jewellery.

Nevertheless the decision was not acted upon without provoking one little but very significant incident. His kinsmen and clansmen in Bombay were outraged that anyone should leave India for so immoral a place as England in 1887. The

clan-leader, the Sheth, summoned the kinsmen, admonished and warned Gandhi. Since he persisted—as was his wont when his mind was made up—they excommunicated him. Not by blood but by ritual act he became an outcaste—like Spinoza, an excommunicate. M. K. Gandhi, that is, began life as a premier's son but also as an outcaste. . . .

On September 4th, 1887, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, aged eighteen, sailed from Bombay for England, leaving his wife and a child of a few months of age behind him.

He arrived in London, at the Victoria Hotel, on a Sunday, in white flannels and with no opportunity of getting at his other clothes which had been sent care of his agents. Already he had been told on the boat that it would be quite impossible to live in London without eating meat. Fortunately he had a friend in Dr. P. J. Mehta who called on the evening of his arrival, and gave the young man much good counsel—as well as the somewhat odd advice that only servants addressed other people as “sir” in England.

The search then began for lodgings, somewhat less expensive than the £3 he had had to pay for a week-end at the Victoria Hotel; and, above all, for a restaurant where he could get meatless foods. The shy and tongue-tied young man found it difficult (although his Indian instruction under the *raj* had been in English) to explain his difficulties to strangers. “My mother’s love always haunted me. At night the tears would stream down my cheeks, and home memories of all sorts made sleep out of the question. It was impossible to share my misery with anyone.”

But the future Mahatma, now in the making, persisted. “I must finish the three years, said the inner voice.” He could not relish everlasting boiled vegetables, and the landlady was at a loss to know what to prepare. At last, however, out of this ridiculous misery (as it must have seemed to outsiders) came decisive good. “What,” said an exasperated friend with whom he shared lodgings in Richmond-on-Thames, “is the value of a vow made before an illiterate mother, and in ignorance of conditions here? It is no vow at all. It would not be regarded as a vow in law . . .” From Richmond he moved to West Kensington, where the landlady promised to look after him properly and within his means, feeding him on vegetables.

Only those of us who have lived on fifty-five pounds a year, chiefly on vegetables and rice, can know all of what that meant. At last, on a happy day, Mohandas found his vegetarian restaurant, in Farringdon Street, in the City of London, and bought there not only his food but a copy of Salt's *Plea for Vegetarianism*. Within a short while, following up enquiries, he became a member of the London Vegetarian Society. Again a little while and he was its Bayswater Secretary, attending its conferences, and on its executive committee. His first official post—and this in London, the capital of empire—was won. The young Indian was on his way up, thanks to vegetarianism and vows.

The embarrassment that he had caused his Indian friends by his obstinate refusal to eat meat, the embarrassing scenes with them in restaurants, led M. K. Gandhi to take one of the few resolutions that he ever abandoned. "I undertook the all too impossible task of becoming an English gentleman." He bought himself stylish cut-away dress. He acquired a butterfly collar, striped tie, and even (final glory) a stove-pipe or silk hat, price nineteen shillings. And an evening suit, purchased in Bond Street for ten pounds. He spent ten minutes a day before a mirror arranging his tie and parting his hair in the approved fashion. "It was not correct to wear a ready-made tie and I learnt the art of tying one for myself."

At the same time he considered taking lessons in French, put down £3 for six dancing lessons, £3 for a violin, and a guinea as a preliminary fee in elocution. In addition he invested in Bell's *Standard Elocutionist*. In M. K. Gandhi's brief phrase in the *Autobiography*, "Mr. Bell rang the bell of alarm in my head and I awoke." How could dancing make a gentleman? "If my character made a gentleman of me so much the better." He admits, incidentally, that he was no good as a dancer . . . Perhaps the immediate ground for this sweeping decision "to burn the vanities" was a mistake. Gandhi remained for long as tongue-tied a speaker as John Winant, embarrassed, hesitant, certainly no elocutionist. But his violin teacher encouraged him in his decision to forsake her and also the other muses. However, "the punctiliousness in dress persisted for years." And, in the English years, he was well able to sit down to a rubber of bridge.

The decision was indeed important. M. K. Gandhi never indeed achieved the impeccable Harrovian characteristics of the younger Nehru, Jawaharlal. But he gained, or rather retained, the ability, which is the key to his career, of being able to identify himself archetypally with the mind of the Indian peasant, who is India.

Meanwhile the process of becoming a British lawyer went forward, the "eating of dinners" and, incidentally, the passing of examinations where question papers were easy and examiners generous. The words that had nearly blocked for the young Indian the door to advance, which only courage and chance had broken through, the hasty over-emphatic words of an Indian Civil Servant, Sir Frederick Lely, "graduate first and then come to me"—the kind of foolish advice that harassed and wooden educators are liable to give—became forgotten. At dinners at the Inner Temple, Gandhi was popular because he took no wine, so that other students could take his portion. Conscientiously he read the Latin books of Roman Law because he felt it fraudulent to rely on the cribs—and later reaped his reward, for this grounding in the Civil Law, when he came to practise law in South Africa where the Law of Justinian is the basis of the legal code.

On the 10th of June, 1891, Gandhi was called to the bar; on the 11th he was enrolled as a member of the High Court; and on the 12th he sailed for India on S.S. *Assam*, a fully-fledged English lawyer, who had, however, yet to learn what the inside of a court was like. The second chapter of his life was completed.

## CHAPTER XXXV

WHEN Mohandas Gandhi returned to India he did so with every probability of spending the rest of his life as a district attorney or, at best, as a local official.

Moreover, it did not seem likely that he would prove to be a particularly good attorney. He had no knowledge of Indian law. It was an Englishman, Mr. Frederick Pincutt, who reminded him that he had no knowledge of Indian history. On his first appearance in an Indian court, the Bombay Small Causes Court, he was so seized with stage-fright that he was unable to plead and handed the case over to Patel. It seemed more than doubtful whether he could even make a modest living at the bar. The young lawyer returned, after six months in Bombay, to his home city of Rajkot, hung out his shingle, and sat down discouraged, to the unremunerative task of drafting petitions for poor clients. The second case in Bombay had been the memorial of a poor Moslem of Porbandar against the confiscation of his land. The rest, at Rajkot, seemed likely to be of the same kind. It passed unnoticed that he was becoming acquainted with the needs of the poor. His only encouragement was that given by Frederick Pincutt, that honesty and industry could be the key to success.

For the second time chance intervened decisively in Gandhi's favour. A Porbandar firm, Dada Abdullah & Co., wrote to his lawyer brother, with whom he was in partnership, stating that they had extensive business in S. Africa, and that they were involved in a law-suit, their claim being for £40,000. Would M. K. Gandhi go out, newly briefed from India, to instruct counsel in S. Africa? They would pay all expenses and a fee. Quickly the decision was taken and, for a second time, Mohandas Gandhi left India. Before he finally returned his reputation was to be well-established. Like Lenin, Gandhi's reputation was first established outside his native country. In April, 1893, he set out on the great and, as it was to prove, the decisive venture.



Almost immediately upon arrival in Natal Gandhi became involved in an incident which became a matter of correspondence in the press and established him in the public mind. It was the affair of turban-wearing. It illustrated sharply the nature of the class divisions (or, to use a more familiar Indian phrase, caste divisions) with which he would be confronted in S. Africa. Before long this issue was quite to overshadow the law-suit which was the immediate cause for his journey.

Within a day or two of his arrival his host, Abdullah Sheth (a pious Moslem, be it noted, like many of Gandhi's early clients), took him along to the Durban law courts to observe the procedure. He was wearing an Indian turban. This the magistrate ordered him to remove. He refused and left the court. The custom was that those wearing Moslem dress, described in local parlance as "Arabs", could wear their turbans in court. But Hindus, who in the majority of cases belonged to the lower and despised class of indentured labourers who came over from India on a five year agreement, had to remove their headgear in court out of respect. The Parsi, described locally as "a Persian", did not wear a turban and had no such trouble. M. K. Gandhi suggested to his host the wearing of European dress and thus avoiding the trouble. But to this Abdullah Sheth objected, because only Christian Indians did this and almost all of these followed the (also despised) occupation of hotel waiters. Gandhi would be taken for a waiter. In the press, in response to a letter from M. K. Gandhi on the subject of these discriminations, a lengthy warfare was waged. The wearing of the turban became a symbol of Indian national self-respect.

No sooner did Gandhi board the train for Pretoria than the same issue arose in a new fashion, that of "Jim Crow" regulations. Although the holder of a first class ticket he was ordered "to go to the van". He pertinaciously refused; but the Inner Temple barrister was ejected by a policeman and spent the night in a station waiting-room. It may be that, had he been prepared to pay the five shillings expected by the officials for bedding, no incident would have occurred—but he had his own bedding. The next day, by telegraphed instructions from the General Manager of the railway, he went on to

Charlestown "first class"; but this night he paid for his bedding . . . The same type of incident occurred on the coach to Johannesburg, where an endeavour was made to eject him from his seat by force, and again when he endeavoured to obtain a room in a hotel at Johannesburg. His Indian host in Johannesburg commented: "Only *we* can live in a land like this, because, for making money, we do not mind pocketing insults, and here we are."

The story was repeated on the last stage, to Pretoria. The station-master at Johannesburg, who explained that he was a Hollander and not a Transvaaler, issued a first class ticket. But at Germiston the guard endeavoured to turn him out. "There was only one English passenger in the compartment. He took the guard to task. 'What do you mean by troubling the gentleman?' he said. 'Don't you see he has a first class ticket? I do not mind in the least his travelling with me'. The guard replied: 'If you want to travel with a coolie what do I care?'" That night an American negro found Gandhi rooms in Pretoria in a small hotel run by an American who, stating that he had no colour prejudice but had a European custom, in the end invited him to the common board.

Mohandas Gandhi's career as "the coolie lawyer" had begun. It is not insignificant, as will appear later, that in one of the earliest of these incidents he had received English support and had found that other nationalities (not, in this case, American) behaved worse. A decision had now to be taken. He summarizes the issue himself: "Should I fight for my rights or should I go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial and only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process."

## CHAPTER XXXVI

IN HIS days in London, Gandhi had been brought into fairly intimate social contact with the English. He had moved as a responsible equal in the circles of the Vegetarian Society. Indeed his honesty on more occasions than one compelled him to overcome his embarrassment and to explain to ladies, at Ventnor and Brighton, who thrust him into the society of their younger women friends, that he was already married.

Along with knowledge of English customs he began to be familiar with English ways of thought and religion. In fact, it was through English Theosophists that Gandhi first came to read, in Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, the *Bhagavad-gita* or *Song Celestial*, comparing it with the Sanskrit original. Later it became for him "the book *par excellence* for the knowledge of truth".

Although he declined to join the Theosophists, it was Mrs. Besant who "disabused me of one of the notions, fostered by the missionaries, that Hinduism was rife with superstition". Indeed as a boy, although he had met on friendly terms, at his father's house, Jains, Parsis and Moslems as well as Brahmins, he had developed a dislike of the Christian missionaries. This was not only because their converts began to eat meat and drink liquor, but because "they used to stand at a corner near the high school and hold forth, pouring abuse on Hindus and their gods". At this time, although he resented the missionaries' attacks, he had no close connection with any religion, he tells us, and inclined to atheism. But he had a conviction that "morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality—truth, the polar opposite of escapism".

In England, however, Gandhi met a good Christian from Manchester, a vegetarian and teetotaller, who persuaded him to read the Bible. The Old Testament, especially *Numbers*, he found tedious; it sent him to sleep. But the New Testament brought a new light.

"It was the New Testament which really awakened me. When I read in the Sermon on the Mount such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also', and 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in Heaven', I was simply overjoyed, and found my opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You* gave it permanent form."

The mental task he set himself was to reconcile the *Gita* with the Sermon on the Mount. An encounter with a brash rationalist who attended, with Gandhi, Bradlaugh's funeral and then endeavoured to confound a clergyman, who had also attended it, with neat arguments for atheism, gave him a new prejudice against an atheism which could debate everything, but which did not seem to have any monopoly of the substance of human goodness and peace of mind. It was not mere dead intellectual knowledge about religion which seemed to matter. Later Gandhi had the opportunity of meeting Cardinal Manning, famous for his encouragement of the dock workers and for his help in negotiating a settlement of their strike. And, when he visited the Exhibition of 1890 in Paris, he took the opportunity to visit the ancient churches in Paris. "Their grandeur and peacefulness are unforgettable. I felt then that those who expended millions on such divine cathedrals could not but have the love of God in their hearts."

In South Africa, the future Mahatma had leisure to engage in discussions on these matters more fully. One of the first court interpreters he met there was a Catholic Christian. Abdullah Sheth's attorney, A. W. Baker, was a lay preacher—one who held the Calvinist belief that "it is impossible to find eternal peace, unless one accepts Jesus as the only Son of God and Saviour of mankind", a belief comparable to the Anglican Article damning "the good works of the heathen" and going beyond the orthodox faith that outside the church there is no security. M. K. Gandhi, by family a Vaishnava in ritual, had been brought up with the rather different belief that Vishnu had many incarnations, including Rama and Krishna,

and, for that matter, Buddha. He also came across more than once oddities, errant members of the Plymouth Brother faith, who seemed to see little harm in a few delinquencies, since this gave the more opportunity for grace without which salvation was anyhow impossible—a variant of the old heresy “let us sin the more that grace may abound”, as the Elizabethan divines sardonically expressed it. Religion and morality, for these gentlemen, did not seem, so far as Gandhi could observe, to be synonymous.

With the humility, simplicity and deep sincerity which characterizes him, Gandhi told Mr. Baker his position. “I am a *Hindu* by birth. And yet I do not know much of Hinduism, and I know less of other religions. In fact, I do not know where I am, and what is and what should be my belief. I intend to make a careful study of my own religion and, as far as I can, of other religions as well.” The Mahatma certainly was to have his fill, before he had finished, of the Christian sects.

In the Baker circle he not only met elderly maiden ladies who provided him with a quiet, friendly society to his taste, but also the Quaker, Coates—a meeting which began a connection with Quakerism which remained to the very end. Nevertheless, Coates clearly took the view that Mohandas had to be “rescued from the abyss of ignorance” and that good works (despite the words of St. James) were useless. In reply to one of his friendly interrogators (a Plymouth Brother discoursing on grace), Gandhi said: “If this be the Christianity acknowledged by all Christians” (which it was not) “I cannot accept it. I do not seek redemption from the consequences of my sin. I seek rather to be redeemed from sin itself, or rather from the very thought of sin. Until I have attained that end, I shall be content to be restless.”

“It was impossible for me to believe that I could go to heaven or attain salvation only by being a Christian . . . It was more than I could believe that Jesus was the *only* incarnate Son of God . . . From the point of view of sacrifice it seemed to me that the Hindus greatly surpassed the Christians . . . Hindu defects were pressingly visible to me. If untouchability could be a part of Hinduism, it could but be a rotten part or an excrescence . . . If the Vedas were inspired, why not also the Bible and the Koran?”

In response to messages, he received advice at this crisis from his friend Raychandbhai in India. "On a dispassionate view of the question, I am convinced that no other religion has the subtle and profound thought as Hinduism, its vision of the soul, or its charity," wrote Raychand. To his Christian friends, including the Rev. Charles Phillips, head of the churches for "coloured" people, a Congregationalist, and the Rev. Joseph J. Doke, a Baptist, the Mahatma remained indebted for the religious quest that they had awakened in him. Doke wrote the first book on Gandhi (*M. K. Gandhi : an Indian Patriot in S. Africa*) in 1909, in which year Henry Polak published a booklet on him in India. Raychand, however, this Indian jeweller with the fantastic memory and the purely disinterested and well-balanced character, was one of the three men who in life influenced the Mahatma most deeply, the man who came nearest to being his acknowledged teacher, the man who always had on his lips the words of the poet Muktanand:

"I shall think myself blessed only when I see Him  
In every one of my daily acts."

The other two guiding spirits M. K. Gandhi never met personally. He came across their books in South Africa. Of the first he writes: "Before the independent thinking, profound morality, and the truthfulness of this book, all the books given me by Mr. Coates seemed to pale into insignificance." The second of these books he read on his second visit to S. Africa, in the train between Johannesburg and Durban. It was a gift from Polak, and Gandhi says that it changed his entire life. The authors were Tolstoy and Ruskin. The books were *The Kingdom of God is within You* and *Unto This Last*. With them, as serving to crystallize Gandhi's thought, should be mentioned Thoreau's essay, *Civil Disobedience*, although in the practice of civil disobedience he was no little influenced, according to Mrs. Polak, by the contemporary Women's Suffrage movement.

Two things can be said about the Mahatma, which emerge clearly from this story of early experiences. The first is that the great teacher of India and of the world, utterly Indian although he is, yet resided during most of his formative years

outside India, and if not in the conduct of his life, yet in the tone of his ideas, is deeply under Western influence; he is as much broker of thought of the West to the East as of the East to the West. His religious interests were aroused in England and shaped in S. Africa. The decisive books that influenced his life, the New Testament apart, the *Gita* and the works of Tolstoy and Ruskin, have been by authors two of whom were European, although perhaps the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas should be placed along with them.

The second observation is that, although by profession a lawyer and by practice one of the world's great statesmen, the Mahatma has essentially the mind, the way of thought and the preoccupations of a theologian, even if of a theologian primarily concerned with moral issues. Hence his greatest European friends have been Quakers or missionaries, such as C. F. Andrews, the author of *What I Owe to Christ*. This is a fact which many politicians have chosen to ignore to their cost. It has made him peculiarly baffling to politicians of the Western species, who tended to explain him away as a fakir, a fraud, an exhibitionist or just a shrewd politician like themselves. Moreover, those politicians who have understood and got on with him best have been men such as Lothian, Halifax and Cripps, who have themselves been men profoundly concerned with religion and moralists.

The third observation is one which will merit our fuller attention later. The Mahatma speaks of reconciling the *Gita* and the Sermon on the Mount. It may be said without exaggeration that Mohandas Gandhi's whole life-work was, at core, concerned with carrying through this reconciliation, this synthesis; and with voicing a gospel which expresses it.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

THE DADA ABDULLAH case was won. On M. K. Gandhi's initiative it was settled, with pecuniary saving by both parties, out of court by arbitration. Gandhi comments, typically enough: "I had learnt the true practice of law. I had learnt to find out the better side of human nature and to enter men's hearts. I realized that the true function of a lawyer was to unite parties riven asunder." As a lawyer, he occupied himself with bringing about compromises. "I lost nothing thereby—not even money, certainly not my soul." A little later and he was earning a substantial income by the law, and giving it away.

The case being over, Gandhi prepared to return home. Again chance intervened in his favour. Already a farewell party was being given in his honour in Sydenham, Natal. While at it he noticed, in a remote column of a newspaper, a paragraph about a Bill to be introduced in the Natal Legislature to deprive Indians of their right to elect members to that Legislative Assembly. His hosts knew nothing about the details. "But there are so many young Indians born and educated here. Do they not help you?" "They! Being Christians they are under the thumb of the white clergy, who in their turn are subject to the Government." Instantly Gandhi felt that this class should be claimed for Indian patriotism. And that something should be done about the Bill.

A little earlier, M. K. Gandhi had addressed his first indoor public meeting in Pretoria, capital of the Transvaal—which was still in those days under President Krüger. It was the British Agent there, it is worth mentioning, whom he had found most friendly to his cause. His object at the meeting had been to make Indians in the Transvaal alive to their condition. South Africa was ceasing to be a place for self-respecting Indians to live in. Typically enough, Gandhi took as his text the need for truth, including truth in business. He



developed the idea of the civic responsibilities of the merchant group, not least in matters of Indian sanitation, lack of which gave one pretext to the Boers for discrimination. Then he asked for, and got, a working committee. In Sydenham, later, it was the audience which took the initiative. It was one of the guests at the farewell party who suggested that he should cancel his passage. "Stay here a month longer and we will fight as you direct us." Abdullah Sheth joined in the entreaties, and a decision to stay was taken. "Allah is great and merciful," cried the assembled Moslems. "Thus God," writes Gandhiji, "laid the foundations of my life in South Africa and sowed the seeds of the fight for national self-respect."

The record of that fight appears in Gandhi's own book *Satyagraha in South Africa*. He was not finally to return to India until 1914. By then the technique of passive resistance as a positive policy, "firmness in truth" (*sat*, "truth", and *agraha*, "firmness"), was well established.

The Petition against the Bill of 1893 was drawn up. Hindus, Moslems, Parsis, Christians were all brought into the work of organization. "All were alike the children and servants of the mother land." The white population itself by discrimination had cemented this unity. The press seized on the Petition as news and discussed it favourably. The Bill was passed; but a monster appeal of ten thousand signatures was sent to London, to Lord Ripon, then Secretary of State for Colonies. The London *Times* gave support. The organization of Indians was formally constituted on the 22nd May, 1893, as the Natal Indian Congress. Pamphlets were produced, the first being *An Appeal to Every Briton in South Africa*. M. K. Gandhi had found a new vocation. He was deep in the midst of political work. But with a distinctive technique all his own. . . .

This was illustrated by the reappearance of the symbolic turban-wearing issue. Despite opposition but on the proposal of the Attorney General of Natal, M. K. Gandhi became a member of the Natal Bar. He was then requested to remove his turban. He now did so. "I should not exhaust my skill as a fighter in insisting on retaining my turban." Here was an established custom of the Bar of Natal for *all* its members. "All my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught

me to appreciate the beauty of compromise. I saw in later life that this spirit was an essential part of Satyagraha. It has often meant endangering my life and incurring the displeasure of friends. But truth is as hard as adamant and tender as a blossom."

Events soon provided an issue on which the Natal Indian Congress could fight. The Legislature intended to impose an annual tax of £25 on every Indian coolie who, at the end of his period of indenture, refused either to return to India or to renew the indenture. An appeal was made to the British Viceroy in India, Lord Elgin. A reduction in the tax from £25 to £3 (which even so, for a labouring family of four, would mean £12) was secured.

The one month's stay had now become three years. Gandhi's wife and child were still in India. It was time for him to return, for a brief vacation—which he did in 1896, in a boat bound for Calcutta. In Bombay he found a plague raging and a threat of it in Rajkot. An opportunity had arisen for service, and Gandhi availed himself of it. He returned to his theme of sanitation but in a very practical way—and, in India, in a very necessary one. He, and his co-workers, inspected the latrines of the workers, to arrive at the sources of infection, and the houses of the "untouchables". They had more difficulty with "the upper ten". He nursed the sick also, and "my aptitude for nursing gradually developed into a passion".

Some in India endeavoured to persuade him not to return to South Africa. The great work had to be done in India. But for the work in South Africa he felt he had a vocation. He consoled himself with the words of the *Gita* on his station and its duties.

"Finally, this is better, that one do  
His own task as he may, even though he fail,  
Than tasks not his own, though they seem good.  
To die performing duty is no ill;  
But who seeks other roads shall wander still."

In South Africa he knew almost the whole Indian community. For the most part they were poor and illiterate. They were folk such as one of the first people there who had come to

Gandhiji for legal aid—Balasundaram, an indentured labourer who had had his teeth broken by his employer, a humble man who deferentially removed his head-gear when he saw his attorney, not content to salute with both hands. "Service of the poor has been my heart's desire, and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to identify myself with them." He became to them "our Mr. Gandhi", "Gandhiji". Had he not, after all, lived as a very poor man himself, with the utmost economy, in London after he had abandoned the follies of over-spending? Lockhart's Workers' Cocoa Rooms had been good enough for him.

"If I found myself entirely absorbed in the service of the community, the reason behind it was my desire for self-realization. I had made the religion of service my own, as I felt that God could be realized only through service. And service for me was the service of India, because it came to me without my seeking, because I had an aptitude for it. I had gone to South Africa for travel, for finding an escape from Kathiawad intrigues and for gaining my own livelihood. But, as I have said, I found myself in search of God and striving for self-realization. . . . I began to realize, more and more, the infinite possibilities of universal love."

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

IN ALLAHABAD, M. K. Gandhi had received encouragement from the English editor of the *Pioneer*, who had given him an interview on South African affairs at a time when the Indian editors of Calcutta papers displayed little interest. This interview, however, was to have unexpected results on Gandhi's return to Natal. While in India, on this brief visit, he also met for the first time Gokhale, the great Indian Congress leader, in connection with his own appeal for the Indians of South Africa.

A few months later, in 1897, the white residents of Natal were alarmed by the arrival, in two boats, newly chartered by Dada Abdullah & Co., of eight hundred Indian immigrants at one time. They were not reassured to know that M. K. Gandhi was on board. They were informed by the press agencies that he had been agitating in India for Indian rights in South Africa. They demanded the repatriation of the alien invaders of whom Gandhi had now become the symbol and banner-bearer.

When he landed, he was first pelted and then there was a determined attempt to lynch him. He had refused to enter Port Natal other than openly. At last he was rescued by a posse of police from where he stood, with the mob endeavouring to drag him away from some iron railings. In part he owed his life to a lady who had the courage to protect him with her parasol. She happened to be the wife of the Commissioner of Police. Nevertheless, the situation almost got out of hand and he had to be taken in disguise to the police station. Meanwhile the crowd sang:

“Hang old Gandhi  
On the sour apple tree.”

The consequence of this outburst was unexpected. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, cabled

to the Natal Government requesting them to prosecute the assailants. Not for the first time or for the last M. K. Gandhi declined to prosecute. He had his reward in that the Natal press condemned the white mob.

It is interesting in Mr. Gandhi's career how little he owed to the "ballyhoo" of the usual democratic politician. His views indeed about the duty of obeying elders were more traditional than democratic. He owed his *r  clame* to such incidents as the above and to his capacity for identifying himself with neglected causes of humanity when injustice was being done, neglected causes which also frequently connected with a nascent Indian patriotism. With him, patriotism and humanity kept step as they had not done since Mazzini.

From now on Gandhi settled down to the work of political organization in South Africa and to living the Tolstoyan simple life, not merely for the sake of economy or as one of the inconveniences of circumstance, but as a moral mandate. He did not, however, do this with Tolstoyan emphasis until he set up the Phoenix Settlement in 1904, which Polak, who had been articled to him in his law practice, joined for a short while soon after; and until he took his family there in 1906. Not only his own comfort but that of his wife, and even the education of his children were sacrificed to the cause—a matter on the morality of which his eldest son had his own views. Gifts to the family were sold to provide funds for a trust for public work. For the Mahatma they were all necessary sacrifices on the altar of liberty, service and truth. Notoriously the saints are difficult to live with. The Mahatma was assuredly no exception.

While on a brief visit to India in 1901, for the first time he attended the Indian National Congress, that year meeting in Calcutta. And, while there, he received a cable from Natal: "Chamberlain expected here. Please return immediately." Gandhi had become in effect the official head of the Indian community in Africa.

But Mr. Chamberlain could only tell the Indian delegation that the member states of what was later to be the Union of South Africa were on the way to being self-governing colonies, over which the Colonial Office had little power. During these

years of struggle Gandhi was able to keep his temper because he reflected that the colour bar was only a "poetic justice", a punishment for India's own sins in caste discrimination. "We are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same Creator, and as such the divine powers in us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that being but with him the whole world." "Hate the sin and not the sinner"—this was *ahimsa*, the humble basis of a cool recognition of human facts and of an intellectually honest quest for truth about human beings.

The launching of the journal, *Indian Opinion*, in Durban was followed by the need to organize relief and medical work, in the overcrowded Indian cantonment or ghetto, during the Black Plague in Johannesburg. About this time, under the influence of John Ruskin, Gandhi came to feel that the life of labour, the life of a tiller of the soil or a handicraftsman, was especially the life worth living. From that day, the London lawyer and South African social worker and political leader threw in his lot, so far as his style of living was concerned, with the Indian peasant. The Phoenix communal settlement near Durban was founded in 1904. Later came Tolstoy Farm, near Johannesburg. In 1914, most of the members of the Phoenix community returned to India and, on C. F. Andrews' advice, were guests for a while at Santiniketan, under Tagore. Here, at Phoenix, was Gandhi's first *ashram*.

Already, in 1908, Mohandas Gandhi had had his first experience of a term in jail in connection with the passive resistance movement—a movement shaped in its inspiring principles by himself—against Transvaal Government discrimination. It was General, now Field Marshal Smuts, who jailed him, who later was to contribute to the volume in Gandhi's honour presented to him on his seventieth birthday.<sup>1</sup> "How could we resist you in view of the methods which you used?"

It was, however, in connection with the Phoenix settlement, and for reasons typical enough, that the Mahatma began his practice of fasting as a means of bringing people to penitence. (His embarrassed political opponents preferred to call it

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. Radhakrishnan: *Mahatma Gandhi: Essays and Reflections* (1939).

“moral blackmail”—which makes a study of its origin the more important.)

His fellow-worker, Kallenbach, brought up from Phoenix to Johannesburg news which caused him dismay, although the less trustful Mrs. Gandhi had already warned him. Some of the dwellers in this Eden had been tempted of the serpent, and, thinking that they knew better what was good for them, had fallen into sexual misdemeanours which were giving the place a bad name. Gandhi records in his *Autobiography* that, prepared for some of the political passive resisters to have fallen by the way, he was “thunderstruck” by the actual news. He returned to Durban by the next train and began a seven days’ fast and a four and a half months’ abstinence. Already at Tolstoy Farm the Moslem boys had kept the *Ramazan* fast and the Hindus *Pradosha* (fasting until evening) together, the Christians joining in with an improvised Lent. “Fasting and similar discipline is, therefore, one of the means to the end of self-restraint, but it is not all, and if physical fasting is not accompanied by mental fasting, it is bound to end in hypocrisy and disaster.” He also took a vow of celibacy in 1906, the *Brahmacharya* vow, with the concurrence of his wife.

In 1914, Gandhi received instructions from Gokhale to return home *via* London. At first it had been decided that it was Polak who would return. Polak, however, released him, and himself became leader of the Indian community in S. Africa, while Gandhi took on the task of “throwing off fear of the ruling race”. He and his wife reached London on the 6th of August, two days after the declaration of the First World War. While there, incidentally, he became a member of the London Emerson Club, in Buckingham St., Strand. The African period, the period of apprenticeship and maturing, was over. Gandhi was then forty-five years of age. The great period of apostleship had still to come. But the metal of the man had been tested in the furnace.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

DURING his residence in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi made certain political decisions which are of extreme importance for the interpretation of his subsequent actions.

In the days of the Boer War, his personal sympathies apart, he felt that, if he demanded rights as a British citizen, it was his duty to participate in the defence of the British Empire. He, therefore, collected together Indian volunteers for an ambulance corps. The Bishop of Natal used his friendly offices to see that their request that they be sent to the front was acceded to; and at Spion Kop they were working in the firing line. They carried the body of the son of Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar down from the line. These volunteers were awarded, Gandhi among them, the War Medal.

"Hardly ever," wrote Gandhi of these days, "have I known anybody to cherish such loyalty as I did to the British Constitution. I can see now that my love of truth was at the root of this loyalty. It has never been possible for me to simulate loyalty or, for that matter, any other virtue. The National Anthem used to be sung at every meeting that I attended in Natal. I then felt that I must also join in the singing. Not that I was unaware of the defects in British rule, but I thought that it was on the whole acceptable. In those days I believed that British rule was on the whole beneficial to the ruled.

"The colour prejudice that I saw in South Africa was, I thought, quite contrary to British traditions, and I believed that it was only temporary and local. I therefore vied with Englishmen in loyalty to the throne." One reward for his decision was no few accusations and insults from his own countrymen.

Later came the Zulu War. Again Gandhi, on the basis of citizen duty and perhaps displaying a conservatism of the emotions which has always characterized him, expressed his willingness to form an Indian Ambulance Corps, and his offer was accepted. This is the more interesting since Gandhi explicitly states that he has always been unable to draw a



distinction, from the point of view of pacifism, between ambulance work and fighting service in the line. "Those who confine themselves to attending to the wounded in battle cannot be absolved from the guilt of war." Sergeant-Major M. K. Gandhi and his men had especially allocated to them the work of nursing the Zulu wounded, at a time when the Medical Officer in charge was at his wit's end because no one else would attend to them. Thus the Mahatma received his second war decoration. "Wherever we went I am thankful that we had God's good work to do, having to carry to the camp on our stretchers those Zulu 'friendlies' who had been inadvertently wounded, and to attend upon them as nurses."

One consequence of this experience of service for Mohandas Gandhi was unexpected and of interest. He decided that this work of caring for the wounded needed to be done; and that many times in his future life he would have the vocation to do similar work. He decided that this was incompatible with the obligations of family life and required the celibacy of the *brahmacharya*. Had, for example, his wife at the time been expecting a baby, he felt that he could not have thrown himself into this work. He "could not live after both the flesh and the spirit".

"What formerly appeared to me to be the extravagant praise of *brahmacharya* in our religious books seems now, with increasing clearness every day, to be absolutely proper and founded on experience." It is the old argument for the celibacy of the clergy. It is the doctrine of the warfare of the flesh against the spirit, generally discarded in the modern world. The interesting thing here is the faithfulness with which the Mahatma represents, not only certain of the less popular aspects of Hinduism, but also this attitude of orthodox Christianity, as distinct from that of the modern secular world and of popular modernized Christianity. Gandhi took, as I have said, the *brachmacharya* vow in 1906. And it was in 1908, on his return from a visit to London, that he wrote the little book *Hind Swaraj*, which expressed his views political, religious and moral.

In 1914 Gandhi was for the third time confronted with the problem of conscience involved by war. Not in the Boer war, and still less in the Zulu Rebellion, had he had any reason to

believe in the righteousness of these national wars and still less in the righteousness of the methods. There was the further question whether Indian nationalists should not improve the shining hour of British embarrassment by pushing their national claims, a policy later pursued, in the Second World War, by Subhas Bose as, later still, by the Stern group in Palestine.

Gandhi puts on record his views as they were in 1914. "I felt then that [the Indian situation] was more the fault of individual British officials than of the British system, and that we could convert them by love. If we would improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need . . . I thought that England's need should not be turned into our opportunity." Again he appealed for volunteers; and, on this occasion, he worked with the great Indian poetess, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.

But how was this activity to be reconciled with *ahimsa*? This was the question which Polak and other pacifist friends raised. His first reply is very Indian and recalls to one the doctrines of Siva and of Kali, of the eternal destruction and re-creation. "We are helpless mortals caught in the conflagration of *himsa* (violence). The saying that life lives on life has a deep meaning." Yet a warfare against violence can be waged, although victory may be imperfect. "A votary of *ahimsa*, therefore, remains true to his faith if the spring of all his action is compassion . . . He will be constantly growing in self-restraint and compassion, but he can never become entirely free from outward *himsa*". *Ahimsa*, then, non-violence, is relative.<sup>1</sup>

What then is the practical consequence? It is interesting. He could, he felt, boycott the Empire by collective resistance while yet living under its shelter; or he could go to prison for individual civil disobedience; or "I could participate in the war on the side of the Empire and thereby acquire the capacity and fitness for resisting the violence of war". He chose the third course. It will be noted that the question whether war (as distinct from arbitrary violence to man or beast) is *ever* right for anyone and, if so, *when*, is not raised. On one occasion

<sup>1</sup> The information in this paragraph has been supplied to me by Mr. Hy. S. L. Polak.

Gandhi shocked his Hindu followers by having an injured calf put out of its misery. There might be a necessary and a kindly force, a lesser evil. Gandhi concludes: "When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of *ahimsa* is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war, and yet wholeheartedly try to free himself, his nation and the world from war." This is a very much more qualified doctrine than many Western pacifists, who proceed on an unargued moral intuition, suppose.

Roy Walker, himself a pacifist imprisoned in the Second World War, summarizes the position.<sup>1</sup> "Gandhi could see clearly the choice before India. India was vitally concerned in the outcome of the war; sympathies and interests alike drew her to the Allied side in the struggle". Here I think Walker slightly exaggerates the nature of India's interests, save in so far as Western democracy was an interest; and thereby he underestimates the significance of Gandhi's pro-British influence. Pilsudski in Poland did not take Gandhi's view.

Walker continues: "Had India been wholly non-violent, she might have found expression for her convictions in some tremendous extension of *Satyagraha*. But India did not understand or accept *Satyagraha*, and the choice was the old one, violence or cowardice? Better to fight for what you believe right, than abstain from violence only from weakness, from selfishness. To do that would be a betrayal of oneself, a betrayal of one's country; and it would throw upon *Satyagraha* the stain of cowardice. Gandhi's mind was clear." As the Mahatma himself said: "Peace with cowardice is much worse than a battlefield with bravery. I would rather they died fighting than cringed with fear." He was even, at this time, to the dismay of Polak, thinking of offering his services as a combatant soldier.

Actually, as the Maharaja of Dholpur told me, Gandhi on his return to India opposed, and broke, the attempts of Motilal Nehru and others to boycott the Empire in this war. It was Dholpur who suggested to the British members of the Conference that the Indians should be left to themselves and then asked the Mahatma: "Is it Indian ethics that one should

<sup>1</sup> Roy Walker: *Sword of Gold* (Indian Independence Union).

abandon in need one who has been a friend?" "That is a new point of view," replied the Mahatma, "and I must consider it." He delivered his opinion, at the joint conference, in one sentence spoken (characteristically) in Hindustani: "With a full sense of responsibility I beg to support the resolution." He, himself, went on a recruiting campaign down to the South of India, until he was waylaid by dysentery and had to be, almost forcibly, put to bed by his followers. He was at this time, as he said, near to death. It is not for nothing that the statesman and saint, the *pater patriae Indiae*, has, so often if so misleadingly, been called "the watchdog of British interests". What indeed he was was rather a champion of civil order, which is to be changed non-violently. The elements in Mr. Gandhi of the Indian traditionalist, concerned with his station and its duties, must never be ignored. He was a revolutionary conservative and a conservative revolutionary.

## CHAPTER XL

IN 1915 Gandhi returned to India. Nineteen years before, he had first met Gokhale, the Congress leader. He had stayed with him, in 1901, at the time of Lord Curzon's Durbar and Gandhi's first Congress meeting. Gokhale had visited him in South Africa and had made his half-humorous comments on *Hind Swaraj*; and he had visited him as a friend in London. He had told him to return to India, where he was to travel for a year learning the situation. Now Gokhale welcomed him back to India and arranged parties of welcome in Bombay, at one of which a fellow Gujarati made a speech of greeting to Gandhi, which was outstanding for its pleasant tone. The speaker was Mr. Jinnah, then an eminent Congressman. Gandhi alone, as an Indian nationalist, spoke in Gujarati—one of those languages, let it be added, which (as Panikkar points out<sup>1</sup>) divide India by their variety.

Gandhi was now about to enter upon the great phase of his public career. In 1901 he had been merely an office assistant, happy to give a helping hand. Even now he was still only a newcomer. Such men as Gokhale, Tilak, C. S. Das, Malaviya and Motilal Nehru dominated the scene. But the fact that Gandhi was no unknown man was indicated by the fact that the then Governor of Bombay, Lord Willingdon (later Viceroy), with singular perspicacity, expressed a desire to see him, and asked Gandhi to visit him again whenever he liked and to state any grievances.

From the moment of his arrival in India, Mohandas Gandhi, who had defended the indentured labourers or "semi-slaves" in South Africa, personally identified his lot with that of the poor (of whom there are so many) in India. He habitually travelled in the crowded third-class compartments—although this could, and did, involve, on occasion, his being thrust through the window by a porter or standing for two hours on a

<sup>1</sup> K. M. Panikkar: *A Survey of Indian History* (National Information & Publications Co., Bombay)



The Governor-General of Pakistan, with his sister, Miss Fatima Jinnah



*[By courtesy of the High Commissioner for India.]*

Kumbh Mela, Allahabad. General view of the Sangum

sweltering day in a packed carriage. "No reform is possible unless some of the educated and rich voluntarily accept the status of the poor."

However, already Gandhi had got the Phoenix settlement established in Gujerat, outside Ahmedabad, after a brief stay in Tagore's Santiniketan. This was the beginning of his Indian community settlement or *ashram*. There he could live the other, the non-party, side of his "double life". Ultimately the *ashram* was placed near the Central Jail, "as jail-going was understood to be the normal lot of Satyagrahis".

Already, when he visited the "holy man", the Mahatma Munshiramji, at Hardvar, and characteristically set to work to improve the sanitary and scavenging provision for the pilgrims there, *darshan*, or public appearances for paying respect, were demanded of him. In the West, public men have to undergo arranged interviews for the press and photographers to satisfy their devotees. In the East, Gandhi ironically says, "only those who are Mahatmas", a title against which he has protested, "can understand the wocs of Mahatmas". What concerned Gandhi at this time more was to reach a decision that he would admit "untouchables" to his *ashram*—a decision which caused no little discontent, even in the heart of the very long-suffering Mrs. Gandhi. Funds were at first denied by some backers when this decision was made; but unexpected donors came forward.

Perhaps the decisive act in Gandhi's public career was when he determined to take up the case of the indigo labourers or ryots in northern Bihar, under the southern slopes of the Himalayas. This was a case of share-cropping, under a system where the ryot had to plant three-twentieths of his land with indigo. The local authorities, under pressure from the planters, made the initial mistake, first of ordering Gandhi to leave the area when he came up to make an enquiry, and then of arresting him for contempt. On second thoughts they perceived that it might be well to proceed more cautiously, but, not for the last time, Gandhi pleaded guilty.

"According to the law I was to be on my trial, but truly speaking the Government was to be on its trial. The Commissioner only succeeded in trapping Government in the net which he had spread for me." The name of Congress was



scarcely known at the time in this remote area of Champaran, or only known as that of a subversive organization. Gandhi was involved as an individual and the ignorant but trusting peasantry waited with pathetic hope to see what their champion would achieve. Here Kripalani and Mahadev Desai, men whose names would later be famous, came to aid him.

Gandhi telegraphed Malaviya and the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. Abruptly a message came from the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar, Sir Edward Gait, ordering the case to be withdrawn. The crestfallen planters had to endure full publicity in the press about Gandhi's action; a public enquiry ordered by the Government; a unanimous report secured by the Lieutenant Governor in favour of the ryots; and the passing of the Agrarian Act, abolishing this *tinkathia* system of tenure. Gandhi heads the chapter of his *Autobiography* discussing this campaign, "When a Governor is Good". Nevertheless, as Campbell Bannerman said, "good government is no substitute for self-government" and self-government is better.

The Champaran campaign was followed by the strike among the mill-hands of Ahmedabad where Gandhi worked for the first time with Vallabhbhai Patel, and where he developed the specific technique of *satyagraha* in India, the non-violent or sit-down strike. The strike here was morally fortified by Gandhi's decision to fast, as a protest against the readiness of some strikers to surrender, until a decision was reached. He won. Whether a like technique would be successful in the West is open to question. So much would depend upon the moral influence of the negotiator. This was, however, only a specific case of the moral pressure which can be exercised by a negotiator who will go to any length to demonstrate his integrity. In the Kheda (Gujarat) peasants' tax-strike, Gandhi again, by *satyagraha* methods, succeeded in producing a not unsatisfactory compromise. "The main thing was to rid the agriculturalists of their fear, by making them realize that the officials were not the masters but the servants of the people."

It was after the recruiting campaign in the last year of the First World War that Gandhi became involved in activities which brought him into direct collision with the Government of India. Again the authorities against whom he was pitted had not chosen their ground wisely. Alarmed by the Home

Rule activities of Congress, which were stimulated by the promises of the War and League Covenant, the British Lloyd George Government, that had no good record in Ireland, supported the reactionary recommendations for India, made on 19th July, 1918, by the Rowlatt Committee. These involved the perpetuation of war-time regulations; taking away the right of trial by jury in cases of sedition and restricting appeal; authorizing trials *in camera* and admitted evidence not subject to examination; and giving the executive power to determine residence, demand securities and even (as under 18 B Regulation) to arrest individuals without trial.

Congress, the political party body initiated in 1885 by Alan Octavian Hume with the approval of Lord Dufferin, had grown beyond all recognition. As early as 1907, at the Surat Conference, Lokamanya Tilak—the professor of mathematics who said that he preferred to politics the writing of a book on differential calculus—had seceded, with the demand for a boycott of the British when Bengal was first partitioned. In 1916, in the days when Mrs. Besant was still an influence in Indian politics, Tilak led his section back, and captured Congress for nationalism.

This same Conference in 1916, in Lucknow, ratified an agreement with the All-India Moslem League, led by men who had once been inside Congress. Under this agreement a demand that India “should be an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing Dominions” was made the object of policy—an object which some of us who organized the Declaration for Recognition of Indian Independence, in 1943, felt to be inadequate except as a matter of entirely free and unfettered choice. Gandhi himself, it should be added, stated to Polak that he felt that the Statute of Westminster gave this independence.

Gokhale had died within a few weeks of Gandhi's arrival in India. Gandhi now stood by himself, but with the record of his Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda campaigns and the abolition (at last) of the indenture system in South Africa behind him. The last had been achieved largely by the work of Gokhale and Polak, and had led on to its abolition, in 1920, throughout the Empire, due to the activities of Polak, Andrews and Gandhi, here well supported by the Government

of India. His demand for the release of the Ali brothers, and his strong stand in support of the Moslem protest against the treatment of Turkey and, above all, of the Caliphate (Khilafat), earned him, above most Indian leaders, Mohammedan support. In the south, Gandhi concerted measures of protest against the Rowlatt Act with Rajagopalachari of Madras. The result was the All-India *Hartal* (the one-day strike and fast) of April 6th, 1919 (in Delhi, March 30th), which gave a startling manifestation of Indian unity.

However, in the Punjab, the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, took the step of arresting the local Nationalist leaders. Riots broke out, and the military, alarmed by this activity, feared an organized conspiracy of violence. On April 11th, General Dyer occupied Amritsar. On April 13th, his troops shot up a crowd which, in a confined space, the Jallianwalla Bagh, found itself unable to disperse when ordered to do so. According to different reports the loss of life amounted to, at a minimum 400, at a maximum 1,200.

M. K. Gandhi declared, in a phrase of which advantage was taken, that he had been guilty of "an Himalayan mistake" —that the people were not yet sufficiently trained in *satyagraha* for civil disobedience to be advised. So soon as he was permitted to do so (which was in October), he hurried up to the Punjab, where he worked with Motilal Nehru. At the Amritsar Conference of Congress in December, Mohandas Gandhi was able to carry, under threat of secession, a resolution, despite the opposition of C. R. Das, condemning violence in the Punjab and Gujarat. The following year, in Allahabad, he succeeded in getting the Moslems, in their protest on the peace treaties, to adopt his personal policy of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation with the Government as their own policy, instead of that of "the holy war", the *jihad*, which places a Moslem under a religious obligation to resort to the sword.

Unsure of his own position in relation to Congress, he accepted the presidency of the independent All-India Home Rule League; but in September, 1926, in the special session of Congress at Calcutta, and more decisively at the Nagpur Conference in December, Gandhi succeeded in carrying the day for this same policy of Non-Violence. The constitution of Congress was amended to read that Congress aimed at the

achievement of *Swaraj* (Home Rule) "by all legitimate *and peaceful* means".

At the same time Gandhi, in a fashion worthy of a Fra Girolamo Savonarola, was burning foreign cloth, and preaching the merits of Indians wearing Indian-spun cloth—and especially *khadi* cloth, produced by home industry on the hand spinning wheels. When the Prince of Wales, now Duke of Windsor, visited Bombay in November, 1921, the procession was boycotted by a *hartal* of the Indians. Gandhi and his followers burned foreign cloth in nearby streets. "*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*," cried the enthusiastic crowds. "Victory to the Mahatma."

But already the crowds were getting out of hand. Gandhi started a fast. "I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining the spirit of revolt." Nevertheless, over the whole of the rest of India *satyagraha* had justified itself by the peaceful observation of the *hartal*. The Bengal Government took this occasion to declare both the Khilafat Volunteers and the Congress Volunteers illegal. On Congress defiance of this regulation, Nehru, Das and the Maulana Azad were arrested. Tilak had died in 1919.

Horniman, editor of the *Bombay Chronicle*, who had been along with Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu and Patel, when resistance to the Rowlatt Act was first discussed, had been deported. In the subsequent rearrangement of the pro-Congress press, Gandhi became editor of *Young India*. What he owes politically to his position as an editor is not to be underestimated. He was also trustee of the fund for the Jallianwalla Bagh memorial, set up jointly to Moslems, Hindus and Sikhs. Respected as a draftsman, he was made one of the three on the Constitutional Committee of Congress. Some of the old leaders, as we have said, were dead. When so many of the others were about to be arrested, M. K. Gandhi, in December, 1921, was made sole executive authority, with power during the emergency to appoint his own successor. Another stage was passed on the journey to undisputed national leadership.

Mass civil disobedience had been begun when violence broke out again at Chauri-Chaura. Twenty-two policemen were murdered. Gandhiji, who was at Bardoli, immediately gave orders for the calling off of civil disobedience. "If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear

that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, re-arrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained." Bitter were the murmurings and attacks, even from such men as Motilal Nehru. A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved in Committee, although it was defeated.

On 13th March, 1922, the situation was saved by Indian Government action. The Mahatma was arrested and put in Sabarmati Jail and later in Yeravda Jail. In one prison or another he was to spend no small portion of the next twenty years. Of these days he could write: "My devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet with all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means."

## CHAPTER XLI

IT WAS this arrest which led to one of the most famous trials in history. It aroused a feeling in India, a feeling that Mohandas Gandhi embodied as no other man did the very soul of India, which feeling was expressed in Gandhi's own *ashram*, in December, 1922, by the greatest man after Gandhi in that land, Rabindranath Tagore. *Mahatma* means no more than "great soul", but in Hinduism it has an implication of at-one-ment with the divine spirit of righteousness itself. He who knows this spirit, cried Tagore, himself becomes immortal, "Mahatma". Tagore quoted the Upanishad:

"There is the Luminous One, the Creator of All, the  
Great Soul,  
Always set in the heart of peoples,  
Revealed by the heart, the insight, the intelligence.  
Who knows it, he becomes immortal."

On March 18th, the trial began before the Sessions Judge of Ahmedabad. By an act surely without precedent, it was the Court which rose when the prisoner entered the courtroom. From the beginning of the trial a comparison which did not seem blasphemous was absent from no one's mind. The court had no desire to earn the fate of Pilate or of the English judges who tried and burned at Rouen the Maid of Orleans. Even in doing what it conceived to be its duty, the inevitable duty of government as such, the conscience of a great and not irreligious people was stirred—a people slow to sentiment but not insensitive when stirred. So often the British Empire had been compared with the Roman. The comparison, and its warning, had sunk in.

The charges were explained. The accused had brought or attempted to bring into hatred or contempt, had excited or attempted to excite disaffection toward His Majesty's Government by law established in British India. Gandhi and

Shankarlal Banker, arrested with him, both pleaded guilty. Nevertheless the prosecuting counsel, Sir T. Strangman, chose to state his case in full.

Mohandas Gandhi replied. He told of his own history, of the Rowlatt Act, the Amritsar massacre, the betrayal of the Moslems. He had only preached, incessantly he had instilled, non-violence. But "India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system . . . I am here to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen.

"The only course open to you, the Judge, is either to resign your post and thus dissociate yourself from evil; or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are seeking to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal."

Nowhere does M. K. Gandhi make it clearer—and this has a significance in our own days—that, although his gospel is one of charity and peace, it is not one of compromise and appeasement of evil but one of resistance: a new, non-violent technique in resistance and vocal protest. Prison, not the ivory tower of those who would find an alibi as "non-politicals", is the place for the protester. I recall being corrected by Pandit Nehru on this in 1938.

The judge, C. N. Broomfield, summed up before delivering sentence. M. K. Gandhi, by his own acts, had made it impossible for any Government which proposed to govern to leave him at liberty. The judgement would be based on the precedent of Tilak twelve years before. "Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life." But the law had to be enforced. The sentence would be for six years' simple imprisonment. If events made it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release him, no one would be happier than himself, the judge.

The nominal issue was political. But the basic issue was the old, old one between the duty to obey the law and the duty of a patriot to obey his conscience. It was not for nothing that

Gandhi wrote that he regarded Socrates as one of the greatest of all *satyagrahis*.

Gandhi refused to ask for special privileges. Even, therefore, C. F. Andrews was unable to come to see him. He studied the *Gita* (on which he wrote a commentary, as Tilak had done before him), the Koran, Bacon, Emerson, Thoreau, Tolstoi, Ruskin. In the evenings he studied the Bible with a Chinese Christian. In 1923 his health became worse and at last an operation, in January, 1924, became imperative for suppurating appendix. He was removed to Poona Hospital. Andrews wrote: "There is a ruler of India here, in this hospital, whose sway is greater than all imperial power. His name will be remembered and sung by the village people long after the names of the modern governors in their palaces in New Delhi are forgotten."

In early February Gandhi was unconditionally released. To his bungalow on the palm beach at Juhu came Jawaharlal Nehru, already twice imprisoned, along with his father and C. R. Das. Gandhi stood against entering the provincial legislatures set up under the 1919 Act. It was not his view of non-co-operation. The Nehrus preferred to use them, as the Irish had used the Imperial Parliament, as a lever. But, although Gandhi was President of Congress in the Conference at the close of 1924 at Belgaum, he deliberately remained politically in the background. His concern was with the increasing Hindu-Moslem communal divisions, with the cause of the "untouchables", and with Indian village industry. "Hindu-Moslem unity I have made a mission of my life. I worked for it in South Africa. I toiled for it here. I did penance for it."

In April, 1925, he was at Vaikam in Travancore, leading a *satyagraha* campaign for temple-entry which, as I have said, so soon was to succeed. Gandhi felt debarred from active political work until the six years of his sentence of 1922 had fully run. At the Madras Congress session it was Jawaharlal Nehru who got the Congress object changed to "complete National Independence". Meanwhile the decision was taken to boycott the, purely British, Simon Commission of Enquiry. However, Gandhi moved the Calcutta resolution, of 1928, demanding Dominion status by 1929. "Fifteen years' stress",



wrote Nehru, "on non-violence has changed the whole background in India."

The orderly progress of the campaign against the *Raj* continued, increasingly unbroken by terrorism. The first Round Table Conference, of 1929, was boycotted since there were no assurances available of a forthcoming Dominion status. On April 6th, 1929, Gandhi symbolically broke the law, under which the Government had a monopoly of salt manufacture, by using natural salt at Dandi on the sea near Surat. On May 4th, Gandhi was again arrested, while the police war broke out in *lathi* charges against the law-breakers. In one case infuriated villagers set fire to a school-house in which police had been locked. "Two Congress volunteers broke the door open and rescued the police from the flames at the risk of their own lives."

Sastri and Sir Tej Sapru, delegates to the first Round Table Conference, asked for opportunity to negotiate with the Congress leaders. Gandhi and twenty-six others were unconditionally released. Gandhi put himself into direct contact with his "opposite number" at the head of the British Administration, who yet was in so many ways a kindred soul with some of the same moral conviction, Lord Halifax, then Lord Irwin, the Viceroy. Reginald Reynolds was his messenger. The horizon already began to show signs of dawn. During an interview with the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi, it is said, was offered tea. He asked, however, for water, took a pinch of "illegal" salt from his robe, dropped it in the water, and drank. On August 29th, 1931, Mohandas Gandhi sailed, after so many doubts and delays, on s.s. *Rajputana* for the second Round Table Conference in London.

To the customs officers at Marseilles he declared: "I am a poor mendicant. My earthly possessions consist of six spinning wheels, prison dishes, a can of goat's milk, six homespun loin cloths and towels, and my reputation which cannot be worth much." Sternly, and to the not small dismay of his colleagues on the boat, all excess luggage was sent back at Aden. On his arrival in London he was taken by his friend, Muriel Lester, to the Kingsley Hall social settlement, in the East End of London, of which she was head. There the room can still be seen which he occupied, and the spinning wheel which he used for his daily period of thread-spinning.

It was in London that I first had the honour of meeting the man who, far better than Napoleon to whom Goethe applied it, deserves the epithet of "this world spirit". I met him first at a public luncheon where, I recall, I was sitting next to C.E.M. Joad, and then, as one of a small party of a dozen or so, including Lord Stansgate and H. J. Laski, in the Gower Street apartment borrowed from the Horrabins for the occasion by Ellen Wilkinson, later Minister of Education. I was impressed—impressed by the signs and wonders, by Gandhi as an unusual kind of politician; but I had, as yet, no insight. I could see, but I did not understand. Even some of those at the party, not the least "Jesuitical" themselves, dismissed him as "too much a Jesuit for them". His religiosity offended their Fabian common sense, their Marxist prejudices, and indeed their Bloomsbury good taste.

Gandhi not only attended the Round Table Conference, which broke down on the old issue of concession of the Congress demands—even of immediate Dominion status. He also went up to Lancashire, where the textile operatives were affected by the Indian home-spun cloth *swaraj* campaign. "Your average unemployment dole," he told them, "is ten shillings. Our average income is seven shillings and sixpence a month." He told later of his impressions. "We were prepared for courtesy; we were even prepared for a little bitterness which distress and misunderstanding often create; but we found instead a warmth of affection for which we were not prepared. I shall treasure the memory of these days to the end of my earthly existence."

At the Round Table Conference he told the delegates: "India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like: a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want, and not the artificial product."

In Kingsley Hall there was the same intimacy. "Mostly," wrote Muriel Lester, "it was the young fathers and mothers who came nearest to him; all unselfconscious they were, and as they pressed forward they held their babies out for him to touch." A local worker said, "I watched all his ways; I reckon he was a man you must admire . . . a fine chap, laughing and jolly, nothing out of the way at all."

In December he left for India. It was his last visit to the West.

## CHAPTER XLII

THE YEAR 1932 was to see the second great Civil Disobedience campaign and its violent repression. Something clearly had got to give way if India was to have peace. The question was whether it was to be the national freedom movement. It was easy to say that India was not united. But it was difficult to say that Congress was not representative at least of the articulate majority; or to say that all the subjects of the Indian princes should be counted as supporting whatever might be the views of their rulers; or that these views were synonymous with what Western politicians, when addressing their electors, called "progress". It was not impressive both to say that India wanted nothing better than she had, and to prevent her from saying what she wanted.

It was only possible for the British residents to say that, by intuition, they knew what the Indian masses wanted, and that it was not what the Indian leaders wanted—that most Indians were not politicians. No more were most people in most other parts of the world. India was as ripe for democracy as Russian Turkestan or many of the Federated Republics of the great Soviet Union, about whose "fuller democracy" many people were to talk so glibly. It was more ripe.

In January 1932, Gandhi was again arrested, under an 1827 regulation which permitted detention without reason assigned. His time in Yeravda Jail was twice marked by fasts to secure the removal of the disabilities of "untouchables". On one occasion, legislation in Madras to permit temple-entry to the "untouchables", in an area not unfriendly to it, was vetoed by the Viceroy out of regard for Hindu orthodox susceptibilities, on the ground that legislation of this kind must be of a national order. On the other hand, Dr. Ambedkar was to be found demanding the total abolition of all castes, that is, the abolition of the Indian functional society with its duties.

The Government policy at this time, under Lord Willingdon, following the breakdown of the Round Table Conference, was

"tough". Sir Samuel Hoare went to the point of describing the new ordinances as "very drastic and severe". The Anglican Bishop of Madras declared: "Although it deeply grieves me to say it, I see in Mr. Gandhi, the patient sufferer for the cause of righteousness and mercy, a truer representative of the crucified Saviour than the men who have thrown him into prison, yet call themselves by the name of Christ." In 1933 Gandhi was released again unconditionally, but turned away from Congress work, which was left to the Swarajists such as Nehru, in order to devote himself to the work in the Indian villages. Almost a break had come with Nehru when Civil Disobedience was called off. The *Gita* says: "The Lord created beings with the duty of sacrifice cast on them." But the two men interpreted this differently. Nehru was concerned with quicker political progress where Gandhi was occupied with personal work in the famine stricken areas and among the *Harijans*, the "pure men of God", the "untouchables" whom Gandhi declared pure. Nehru was beginning to have some fellow feeling with the British politicians who found a saint with the mind of a theologian a difficult leader to deal with.

Meanwhile Mohandas Gandhi had to deal with his own personal problem. His rebellious son Harilal had ended his escapades by declaring himself to be a Moslem. The governing motive of his life was an overpowering desire to annoy his father. "I do not mind," commented the Mahatma, "whether he is known as Abdulla or Harilal, if by adopting the one name or the other he becomes a true devotee of God which both names mean."

In 1936, Congress decided to co-operate by accepting office in the Provincial Legislatures, set up under the Government of India Act of the previous year. In 1937 Gandhi wrote: "In the greater part of India the Congress is both in office and in power." It was indeed in office in nine out of eleven provinces. The end of the long struggle was drawing near. Westminster had reversed the repressive policy of '32.

Already world war was approaching, and the Mahatma was being solicited for his comments. The conduct of Hitler towards the Jews was "dragging the German name into the mire". But Gandhi declined to believe that even Hitler or Mussolini or Stalin were beyond redemption. "Behind the death-dealing

bomb," he wrote ten years ago, "there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. At the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism, if applied in a sufficient measure, will produce the desired result, namely, bind the adversary to the tyrant's will . . . I have an implicit faith—a faith that burns to-day brighter than ever, after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence—that mankind can only be saved through non-violence, which is the central teaching of the Bible, as I have understood the Bible.

"What does it matter, then, if we perish in the attempt to apply the principle of non-violence? We shall have lived and died for a great principle."

As for those who took the route of war, "if there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious". "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. . . . It is a first class human tragedy that the peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus, whom they describe as the Prince of Peace, show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus' message to select individuals." It was that kind of statement which made the Pharisees and Sadducees, the pseudo-Christians and the respectable politicians hate him. He exposed them.

In 1939 Gandhi entered upon the campaign against the repressive measures against political activities put into force by certain princes. Meanwhile the struggle was again joined in Congress on the issue of non-violence, with Subhas Bose leaning towards the methods of armed force and the organization of a National Army. Thanks to Gandhi's persuasion, Bose resigned the Presidency, while Nehru, now supporting Gandhi on this issue, condemned, through a resolution of Congress, "the British foreign policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the recognition of Rebel (Franco) Spain." India, it was affirmed, must direct her own foreign policy.

Gandhi, for the second decisive time, declared, "we do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin"; but the Working Committee of Congress declined to "go the full length with

Gandhiji." Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Moslem Congress President, declared that Congress would support the war (already officially declared by the Viceroy) if a provisional National Government were set up. The British Government countered by replying that the future constitution should be "primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves". The problem of Pakistan, and of the demands of the "communal" Moslems was coming to the fore.

Gandhi at this time demanded "freedom to propagate non-violence . . . as a substitute for war". Had non-violence been adopted, "the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations and an orgy of hatred . . . I claim to have been the life-long and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be the lover of your empire. I thought it was doing good to India. When I saw that by the nature of things it could do no good, I used, and am still using, the non-violent method of fighting imperialism." "The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." That was the campaign cry. Arrests were extensive, but Gandhi this time was discreetly not arrested and the issues of *Harijan* continued to appear.

## CHAPTER XLIII

THE STORY of Mohandas Gandhi, from now on, is the history of India. Indeed it had been such now for some time. So often opponents (and he had many in India itself) or wishful-thinkers said: "He is old and *passé*, his influence has gone". "He is almost senile." "Such remarks," writes Jawaharlal Nehru, "have been repeated many times in the course of the last fifteen years, and they have demonstrated every time how singularly ignorant our rulers are about the feelings of the Indian people. Ever since Gandhiji appeared on the Indian political scene, there has been no going back in popularity for him, so far as the masses are concerned. There has been a progressive increase in his popularity, and this process still continues." "*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*. Victory to Mahatma Gandhi." This was the spontaneous exclamation of the Indian peasant.

The extravagant adulation of Romain Rolland in his famous monograph on Gandhi,<sup>1</sup> where he calls him the Messiah of India, perhaps explains why the Pope did not see him when he passed through Rome. He was there received by the King of Italy and Italian dignitaries, as he had earlier been by the King of England. Princess Maria of Italy presented him with her own hand, when he left Rome, with a basket of Indian figs. In Rome, however, he took time to visit the Sistine Chapel at St. Peter's, and to view the great crucifix there. "One can't help," he said to Desai after some minutes, "one can't help being moved to tears." In Durban, Mrs. Polak writes: Gandhi had a framed picture hung on his wall, a head of Christ, "so that I can see it whenever I look up".

Gandhi indeed had, in a fashion which much Hinduism had not, an understanding of pain, of the human tragedy; and, if he found in Hinduism a gospel of charity, he gave to this his own distinctive emphasis as implying a duty to the poor, the starving and the "untouchable". To them existence still meant something, even if it were afloat, bubble-like, upon the

<sup>1</sup> Romain Rolland: *Mahatma Gandhi*, Librairie Stock, 1924.

imperturbable essence, outlasting the aeons, of Brahm the Eternal, the Absolute. Indeed to Gandhi it was reserved—and that was his great challenge—to recall to Christians their own faith, the *via dolorosa* and the humble *imitatio Christi*. To Gandhi the West seemed to have substituted for this faith its own more characteristic gospel of power.

C. F. Andrews, the Christian missionary whom Gandhi had heard preach in South Africa before they spent so much time together in India, caught the mood of this truly apostolic man, with what St. Augustine calls “the naturally Christian spirit”, *anima naturaliter Christiana*. “There is a spiritual palace,” Andrews writes, “which Mahatma Gandhi has built up out of an eternal fabric. Its foundations are deeply and truly laid in the Kingdom of God. No oppression of the poor has gone to build it. Love and devotion and service to the poor are its golden decorations. No military pomp reigns within its borders, but only the peaceful harmony of human souls. No race or colour distinctions have any place in it. No clash of religious controversy mars its silence. Its empire is the heart.”

Its gospel was peace, non-violence, *ahimsa*, “steadfastness in truth”, *satyagraha*. Before, however, the Freedom of India came, or the Cabinet Mission of '46 or the abortive Cripps' Mission, India and this gospel, which the Mahatma had imposed upon Congress, had to meet the final test—the test of the Second World War. Even in the early 1930s that issue could be seen looming as the world passed on into the second part, with its deepening tragedy, of “the interval between the wars”. What should Gandhi do? Subhas Bose chose. He saw his duty as a patriot as being to aid, when and where he could, the enemies of those who “held the East in fee”. Sufficient for the time to consider how to deal with the new tyrants of Germany and Japan. (Had not Hitler said that he would be glad to leave India to the British? One had to bargain.) Nehru was full of sympathy for Republican Spain, for the Czechs, indeed for the Soviets so far as patriotism and caution permitted. What should Gandhi do? What advice should he give to Czechs, Jews, Indians?

When he advised non-violent non-co-operation with the British in order to secure national freedom, the world was with him. The Labour Party, later to be the British Government,



took up his cause, although not before long pressure had had to be exercised. One year I had the honour to try to get in Party Conference a resolution in this sense; and the next year, as a delegate at the Blackpool Conference of 1945, to support the Bristol resolution demanding independence for India. Mr. Winston Churchill, who had had other views in the case of the Boers, could say in 1929: "It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple<sup>1</sup> lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a defiant campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor".

But the loud, gusty words echoed and went with the wind, carrying an uneasy feeling of disquiet even in the minds of willing listeners. Somehow they were vaguely vulgar. *Securus judicat*. Under God and the appeal court of history it was not for Mr. Churchill, who in season could praise Hitler and Mussolini, to judge the Mahatma. The more final judgement was likely to be that of the Mahatma on the man who later had to fight Hitler, and then perforce moved on to denounce, before a confused world, Hitler's enemies. Mr. Churchill came to preach the possible need of fighting twice, and Mr. Gandhi of fighting not at all.

Yet—was Gandhi right? Is Gandhi right? That is the greatest issue of this moment. *Satyagraha*, *ahimsa*, Gandhism, come to a point in the practical technique of applying the gospel of charity and of non-violent non-co-operation. Is that all? Is that enough? This is the world-question.

To counsel Indians to oppose their unarmed bodies to the Japanese, because the few could never conquer, never had conquered, the organized and determined many; to counsel the Czechs and Jews to offer to Hitler non-violent resistance,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Winston Churchill was here wrong: M. K. Gandhi belonged to the Inner Temple—which will be recalled in history, in this connection, as having disbarred him when he was imprisoned. It is perhaps not immodest in this connection to add that the present writer suggested, in appropriate quarters, the award of the Order of Merit, given to Field Marshal Smuts and Mr. Mackenzie King, to Mr. Gandhi. However, the official coach rumbled along so slowly that the possible recipient was dead before anything arrived. If the honour would have added little to him, we should yet have honoured ourselves. But, as Ministers said, as a matter of protocol, who should act first in making the recommendation?

because in the end fewer lives would be lost that way and the end more finally attained by non-violence than by violence and counter-violence, violence and revenge—were these things wisdom? Or, in the words of Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, when this plan was first contemplated against the two-centuries'-old British *Raj*, was it "the most foolish of all foolish schemes", to the wise foolishness? The fact remains that, under the Mahatma's method, the *Raj* has gone—and yet with no little good will between Indian and British. The fact also remains that, under the other "wiser" method, the Third World War daily impends. From the gospel of dominion springs the new Age of the Tyrants.

In March 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India. M. K. Gandhi, having seen the offer, advised him to take the next plane home. The Cripps' offer not only safeguarded minority Moslem rights of secession. It left the Viceroy with reserve powers. India had seen too much of such powers. Her reply lay in the "Quit India" resolution of the Working Committee of Congress at Wardha in July. On August 9th, 1942, Gandhi was again arrested—but with a difference. He was "honourably confined" in the Aga Khan's palace at Poona. On May 6th, 1944, he was unconditionally released. It was at about this time, on the 13th February, that M. K. Gandhi wrote to the well-known Quaker, Carl Heath<sup>1</sup>: "Dear Friend, Your welcome letter came into my hands to-day. I am in the midst of a raging storm and often hum to myself: Rock of Ages cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee. Yours sincerely, M. K. Gandhi."

In 1946 came, with the new Labour Government, the Cabinet Mission to clarify, after how many moments of agonized suspense, a situation which ended, in 1947, with the appointment of Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy and with the British decision to evacuate India. *Swaraj* was won. I was, myself, to see the Viceroy a few days before he went, amid frenziedly cheering crowds, to announce to the Indian Legislature the great decision. *Nehru ki jai*, cheered the crowd. *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*. Not least, miracle of miracles, was the British Viceroy cheered when he took up one of the young

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Carl Heath: *Mahatma Gandhi* (Allen & Unwin). The above, hitherto unpublished letter, is included by Carl Heath's kind consent.

Indian children, liable to be crushed under his vehicle by the surging crowd, and, in royal defiance of all protocol, sat him down in the triumphal car along with Nehru and himself. It was the great miracle and the great triumph, on the great stage of history, of non-violence, of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*, "steadfastness by truth".

It is impossible to pass judgement without bearing in mind the final scene. India is free. The Moslems insist on their communal rights. The sharp clash of arms and the bitter wail of the murdered goes up in the Punjab. It seems as if all India will go up in the flames of civil war. Above all, Bengal, where thousands had been cut down in the streets of Calcutta in '46, is a danger-point. And then, an old man, nearly eighty, takes his Moslem colleague, the premier Surahwardhy, and together they sit in a hut. The excited Bengal crowd gathers—a crowd of Hindus. "Go away, Gandhi," they cry. "Why do you come here to blame us? Why don't you blame the Moslem murderers?" "You can kill me but you will not change my view," comes the reply. And slowly the mob is awed, and the tempest waves of hate are stilled, and quiet comes to the sea of passions, calm returns to Bengal.

The work done—and who can count the consequences if it had not been done and had Bengal followed the example of the Punjab, where Gandhi was not and the usual methods were tried?—the Mahatma leaves for Delhi. There the waters of hate are slowly, and then with quickening pace, beginning to move in unison with the devil's whirlpool of Lahore and Amritsar. Here the Moslem minority and the refugees from the Eastern Punjab have taken refuge in the great Red Fort of the Moghuls. Many have seen their closest kin speared and murdered as the refugee trains came east. They are men who see red; and who have more justification than most human beings in the West, not Jews, have for uncontrollable hate.

It is this Fort which the Mahatma chooses to visit, and to enter alone. How few men have such courage as this man. And in the end he is not assaulted, not assassinated, has no need like the comrades Stalin and Molotov for elaborate police protection, nor yet for a bullet-proof car. He is applauded. The wretched refugees see that they have here a disinterested

man, a man who has worked for Moslem-Hindu unity but who first regards them as human beings, and not as members of a party, "fascist beasts", "communist dogs", "Moslem murderers" or "Hindu assassins". He comes driven by the force of a responsible charity. And they respond. *Mahatma Gandhiji ki jai.*

Here is, then, an issue not to be judged lightly. This issue of whether Gandhi gives the final, the satisfying, answers. It could be and seems likely to be determinant for a civilization. It was the motive for my journey to India.



## PART III

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## CHAPTER XLIV

THANKS before all to Gandhi's leadership, *Swaraj* was won. The little book I held in my hand, *Hind Swaraj*, "Indian Home Rule", held the essentials of the Mahatma's beliefs. It was written in 1908, back in the South African days. Gokhale had said that Gandhi would change, when he came to India, many of the views expressed in it. But fundamentally he had not done so. In 1921 Gandhi wrote of it, "my conviction is deeper to-day than ever". It is so characteristic that this book which, from its title, should be the manual of a political movement, was actually the gospel of a religious and moral faith. It resembled more the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola than a party pamphlet of national independence.

Throwing out by the way such challenging remarks as that "Civilization is not an incurable disease", the Mahatma comes to the key of his argument: Passive Resistance to achieve Freedom; Non-Violence to achieve Justice; Charity to reform Human Nature. And what is required of the passive resister? Something very different from passivity. Something more even than formal non-violent non-co-operation. Not unnaturally even Nehru comments that not everybody was prepared to accept the whole of the Mahatma's teaching.

"After a great deal of experience, it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for the service of the country have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth and cultivate fearlessness . . . Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness . . . When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even that very limited indulgence because he can have no desire for progeny."

How closely the Mahatma's remarks on chastity and marriage resemble those of the early Church Fathers, of St. Augustine, of St. Paul! What then of the worship of Vishvanath, and what of



the tantric yoga of which I have spoken? St. Paul, on these things, would have spoken with the voice of the Islamic soldiers who destroyed the temples of the idolaters. But this is perhaps a superficial view. The tantric yoga itself is governed by a desire to attain power, including power over sexual life, a control not indeed only of the will but of the very muscles, a gymnastic of the body which masters even the organs of generation.<sup>1</sup> In principle then, whatever we may think of what seems the hurtful nonsense of this yoga or its perverse triviality, this scheme is not at variance with the Mahatma's recommendation of self-control, whatever may be the case with what the psychologists call "the persistent urge in the unconscious to orgy" and with the worship of the fertility gods.<sup>2</sup> The excessive cult in India of these last may, indeed, explain the Mahatma's fierce celibacy as much as the abuses of the Syrian religions so largely explain the attitude of St. Paul.

The Mahatma confesses to strong passions which he has to master. The monks of the Thebaid fled from the excessive lusts of the life, and even the religion, of Egypt and Syria. It is an issue, a struggle, which they feel deeply, even which they agonize upon—by which they are shaken to the depths as superficial modern culture is not shaken. Perhaps the Mahatma is a better commentator on primitive Christianity, at least in a hot climate, than we are . . . Unless the majority of the experience of the saints is so to be condemned—the prophetic men, the real men of feeling—the counsels of the Mahatma here are certainly not to be dismissed as those of some crank. It just so happens that the Mahatma takes "the war against the flesh" seriously, as well as that "against principalities and powers". In India it is something more real than in the Arctic Circle.

In *Young India*, in June, 1924, M. K. Gandhi wrote: "He who is not swayed by carnal desire even in his sleep is worthy of all adoration. The control of every other sense shall be 'added unto' him." The quotation from the Gospel is interesting. The Gospel says that, if a man seek the Kingdom of God

<sup>1</sup> Cf. T. Bernard: *Heaven Lies Within Us* (Rider).

<sup>2</sup> Cf., as touching the symbolism of this theme in the West, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali* (Dial). The incessant tendency of the Faustian mind to overshoot erotic symbolism and to plunge, through the cult of irrationalism, into the marshes of magic, is well illustrated in Prof. E. M. Butler's *The Myth of the Magus*, as well as by the story of Goethe himself.

and His righteousness, "all other things shall be added unto him". "Above all," says Gandhi, "one must not consider continence even between husband and wife to be so difficult as to be practically impossible. On the contrary, self-restraint must be considered the ordinary and natural practice of life."

St. Augustine, the African, wrote: "O God, who hast ordained chastity, provide us with the strength that we may do that which Thou must have made possible for us." It is a *cri de cœur* of "the athletes of God". We have here men who admit their own lusts, as Gandhi confesses in his *Autobiography*—although we must bear in mind the tendency of the saints to underline their sins. We have men—and how many there are of them—who feel that this appetite is the peculiar and especial bondage, which deflects men by its sweet gratification from their sense of mission and dedication—or worse, substitutes for complete self-development the eristic condition of conflict and compromise, including compromise with an entirely conventional style of existence as *père de famille*.

"The natural affinity between man and woman is the attraction between brother and sister, mother and son or father and daughter. It is that natural attraction that sustains the world. I should find it impossible to live, much less to carry on my work, if I did not regard the whole of womankind as sisters, daughters or mothers. If I looked at them with lustful eyes, it would be the surest way to perdition."

These are the remarks of the most successful man in India, perhaps in the world, to-day. They are remarks that have a familiar ring, for St. Paul and so many others said a similar thing. They merit consideration. But are they right or are they wrong?

The word for continence which Gandhi uses here is *Brahmacharya*. In orthodox Hinduism it is the discipline, including the discipline of continence, appropriate for the student or novice. It is a discipline opposed to child-marriage. In early middle age a man marries and raises children: this is the second stage. Then, when he has reached fifty and has done his family duty, if he feels the call, he leaves his household, goes (as many eminent Indians have done) and lives by himself, under a renewed discipline, as a hermit in the forest. But Mr. Gandhi is no hermit and, although he has been married and has children, eminent in their own right, one would scarcely

describe him as a family man. He gives to the world *Brahmacharya* an extended significance of his own.

"*Brahmacharya* is not mere mechanical celibacy, it means complete control over all the senses and freedom from lust in thought, word and deed. As such it is the royal road to self-realization or attainment of Brahman" (or Brahm) (*Young India*, April, 1926<sup>1</sup>). "I have discussed *Brahmacharya* in its wider meaning. The ordinary accepted sense of *Brahmacharya* is the control in thought, word and action of animal passion. And it is quite proper thus to restrict its meaning." "A man or a woman completely practising *Brahmacharya* is absolutely free from passion. Such a one therefore lives nigh unto God, is Godlike." Indeed such a one was Ramakrishna.

What is our answer? The Occidental views with repulsion, as do the sons of the Prophet, the worship of Vishvanath, "Lord of the universe", the worship of the *lingam*, the anointed phallus. But do we accept, with St. Paul, *Brahmacharya*? Or with St. Augustine? What do we mean by vice? Is sexual control the core of vice control? How much sexual control? These are issues which Western man evades. But such men as St. Paul and St. Augustine and Kierkegaard did not avoid them. Faust, who could rise higher in aim than the Walpurgis-night, and the vision of fair women in the witch's kitchen with the monkeys, still in loving Margaret, still in digging his ditches to reclaim the good earth and make a garden—Faust still avoids the answer. Shall we look for truth in the monkey temple of Hunaman in Benares? Or agree with the ascetics of affirmation and exclusive dedication?

This, I think, we can say. Human nature may suffer if the natural emotions are inhibited without outlet or sublimation, and the result may be a twisting of character. But the protest against the fertility gods of India is justified. The symbolism of the fertility gods, far from providing any full sublimation, emphasizes that to which human nature is already sufficiently prone, as to gluttony and drinking. Emphasized, an appetite develops for ever stronger stimulants; an appetite for excesses that contribute, not to shock the system into sensitivity and awe, but to sybaritism, to the perversions

<sup>1</sup> Quotations from *The Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi*, by J. P. Chander, with introduction by Rajendra Prasad (Lahore).

recorded in Hindu sculpture; and, in the end, to the perversions and blood-spattered Kali-worship which the genius of Aldous Huxley has adequately dissected and analysed—and to which he has provided a reply in that *Perennial Philosophy* of which the Mahatma is the fine flower.

Human love has its root in a carnal attraction which should be admitted. The symbolism of this carnal attraction is world-wide, even if it appears as the witchcraft which Goethe shows as the first stage of Faust's temptation away from the ivory tower of ideas without power. This attraction has purgative force as against superficial and sordid ambitions which suppose man to be only a counting machine. Therefore the Christian Church has never been so severe in its condemnation of those guilty of these sensual sins as those guilty of cruelty, malevolence and pride. For these first a place was reserved in hell's outermost and least dreadful circle—for those

*"i peccator carnali  
Che la ragion sommeltono al talento".<sup>1</sup>*

But a human love which *becomes fixed* as carnal attraction, and is unable to transcend itself as a mutual human awakening to significance, is less than fully human. It does not develop. Not the worship itself of the lotus, of birth and rebirth—but just this, that the worship does not carry the seeds of any development beyond itself, is what is wrong with it. And that which is less than fully human has no such significance or value for humanity, so as to be desirable as an object of worship.

It is an *Urdummheit*: a primaeval stupidity. Its worshippers are damned to move around in a circle of increasing stimulus and increasing boredom like the alcoholics, losing more and more of human dignity. The Yahoo is not redeemed by tantric yoga or by these rites. And the redemption of the human Yahoo is the object of significant religion. Religion may be concerned with a tranquillity deeper than "the good"; but *the good and the significant remain connected*, along with "whatsoever is honest". It was worth while coming to India to recognize this, even this alone, just at a time when Christi-

<sup>1</sup> "The carnal sinners, in whom reason by lust is swayed." (Dante: *Inferno*, Canto V.)

anity has to meet the challenge of the Vedanta, which grasps so fully the other half of religion, the sense for the Absolute.

Like the Buddha, with his negations and his practical gospel, M. K. Gandhi goes to the opposite extreme to popular fertility worship, by demanding celibacy, even for the married, among true followers. His counsel must be judged as a reaction against an abuse.

Nevertheless, I do not think we can escape quite so easily from our problem. It has been the uniform experience of dedicated men, even soldiers, throughout the ages that, if their work is to be done, they must accept a discipline incompatible with family ties. The war is "against flesh", however unpopular that may be to say. Those can say it best who know most of this worship of the Indian Pan. Even Goethe, the worshipper of Nature, the pagan, so far admitted the incompatibility here of dedication to a work of the spirit with at least marriage that he did not marry until late and then only to regularize a position which his benevolence drove him to regularize. So also does Gide in his *Journals*—although here, in the revolted puritan, is no place for abstinence but for a cult which explains so much of modern France.

If, then, the Mahatma makes this demand for abstinence, he is but running true to form. St. Paul made the same recommendation. The prohibition is not of the sexual act and not even of lotus-worship. "With my body I thee worship"—the worship of all womanhood in the particular woman. The prohibition is of domination by this appetite in so far as it obscures other more architectonic activities, and the deliberate encouragement is of vows which prevent such a domination even by legitimate family cares, by "giving hostages to fortune", and by the nature-urge to populate the earth which opposes the spiritual urge of the utterly dedicated life, a life embracing all the significance of human existence in so different a form from the merely sensuous way, the Nicodemus way.

## CHAPTER XLV

I WANT to develop what I have said in this last chapter. If we are to be shocked by Gandhi, shocked as the enlightened modern age is by "a purity complex", we had better be shocked early. The Mahatma opposes chastity to the fertility cult. One may begin by making obvious and prosaic observations. Over-population, it may be said, is the curse of India, the rock on which all schemes for raised wages and social improvements go to wreck. If the Hwang-Ho is China's Sorrow, its Siva and destroyer, the fertility which the Ganges typifies is India's Sorrow. Perhaps this immense population, this biological warfare, may ensure the ultimate domination of the world by the Indian or the Chinese peoples. But at what a cost and how many half-starved bodies! M. K. Gandhi, then, indicates a way of self-control by which to reduce this population and to have other interests than procreation by "family men". But, how much better, it may be said, if he would advocate temperance and self-restraint for all, instead of this violent advocacy of non-marriage for at least the missionary few.

The real issue, however, for the Mahatma goes deeper than a sociological recommendation, however important it may be to give the Indian people a more important interest than paternity or to show that there is one. His implied war on the fertility gods has a wider meaning. It is the issue between what Thomas Mann perversely calls "the sons of god"—the sons of the nature-gods of Hinduism—and "the sons of the spirit", the Mahatma's, the Christian, the Buddhist, even the Vedanta spirit.

"The Vedanta spirit," I write, in so far as the Vedantist is a worshipper of Brahm and Eternal Being over against transient Nature and *maya*. Nevertheless, the Vedanta spirit is also that of reconciliation with Being as "all that is"—which includes the authorship of both good and evil and is fate. Such a worship must involve tolerance, monistic acceptance of both good and evil, a tolerance which Mann says that Goethe and

all "the sons of god" had, the amoral tolerance of Hinduism. But against this the Mahatma, like the Christian and Moslem, wages the dualist war of the spirit for good against evil, and against Nature so far as it does not give birth to good alone but twins with both good and evil. The spirit of the Mahatma is that of a Christian monk, some St. Peter Damiani, engaged in the warfare of the spirit for inner reform.

Man has certain appetites, to eat, to drink. Should he not gratify them? Certain men, however, have appetites for drugs, or for slowly murdering their neighbours, as the Loeb brothers did, and watching their reactions. These appetites we call perversions. If, then, a whole people takes to cannibalism or to gambling, is this not a perversion? Is not cruelty natural to the Human Yahoo? Is not Original Sin just as "natural" as the other side of his nature, Rousseauistic virtue? The men of the Enlightenment over-stressed the virtue because the Calvinist and Lutheran heresy had over-stressed the natural "corruption to damnation". But were not both alike true? Had Hinduism and the Mahatma between them grasped both truths, that of "natural innocence" and that of "natural vice"?

Is the sexual act rational? Is it right? Does the rational conscience approve? Only a Buddhist would hold that the human race might as well be discontinued. Only a fool would hold that the sexual act is only performed in order to continue that race. Where is the proper norm, and for whom? Should we accept ourselves as we are and "make the best of ourselves", acquire power of personality that way; or try to "change ourselves"? Are these incompatible?

No law, I reflected, will cover all cases or reduce to one rule the priest and the courtesan types. Only if we decide who is the true *Brahmachari* and what is his rule for himself, shall we be able to decide whether the trade of the courtesan, yes, and even the function of the mother, the father, ought to be abolished.

Humanity loves its lusts and its romances. What would the world be without its romances, its erotic adventures, its erotic beauty? A nunnery—or a cemetery?

For the detached man, the disinterested man, was the Mahatma right? This seemed to me the helpful way of approach. I felt that he was right. Because he took up the



*[Photo P A — Reuter*

Mourners before the painting of the Mahatma  
at India House, London





*[Photo Keystone]*

Pandit Nehru, Mrs. Naidu, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Sardar Patel  
awaiting the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi's ashes at Allahabad Station

challenge of "the sons of the spirit". Because he spoke, and here addressed his message only, to those called to be "sons of the spirit." I could not yet here take the Mahatma himself as guide, without question, because in my pride I had come from the West precisely to value, which is to judge, him. But that so many—not only Aurobindo and Ramakrishna; but so many in the West had agreed with him—this was a guide. Epictetus, incidently, had warned against marriage.

Did we yet desire to be then "like Gods"? I had heard this in Alexandria, from the gnostics, from the Rosicrucians, as well as in India; and I was not impressed. It was stained with a worse stain than any lust for a prostitute. It was stained with insufferable pride. Men should not seek to be gods. Ramakrishna should not seek to be a god, or his followers to make him one, with a temple and a large statue. And Buddha? And Christ? There perhaps one has to pause.

I had met Gandhi in a drawing room. Christ went to the marriage feast of Cana. But one does not think of Gandhi or Christ as good drawing room company. A god in a drawing room. They are always liable to say unexpected things—things in bad taste. Are all gods liable to say things in bad taste? There is a collision of two worlds. That which is good taste by the standards of one is bad taste by the standards of the other.

What would the man of good taste do, the worldly man, if he met a saint in a drawing room? (Or Lenin, for that matter). The Second Person of the Eternal Trinity does not come into a drawing room. But Mr. Gandhi might, talking about his wife—and *brahmacharya*. I met M. K. Gandhi once in a London Gower Street apartment. Ellen Wilkinson was hostess. What did Ellen Wilkinson do? Everybody was, I think, a little stiff and a little embarrassed. The politicians and the worldly men did not know what might be said next. They might be asked whether they had been saved, as by a Salvationist.

I had lived my mature life, I had come to India, as a confessed admirer of Goethe, as one who took Goethe as model and type of the admirable Western man, the "universal man", *universale uomo*, the civilized man. Even the polished, sophisticated, cultivated man. Faust yet knew that he, himself, by marriage had deserted and repudiated his own first mission—

that for Faust, in his personal experience, the Mahatma was utterly right. The spirit had called and Faust had answered—and then, tempted by the world, had fallen away. There could be little doubt that it was the Mahatma who represented the Christian spirit of dedication for better or for worse, of dedication to disinterestedness; and that it was Goethe, in his Olympian oversight ignoring the humble, who stood over against the Christian spirit. And the whole issue of what modern man means by civilization and “the civilized type” lies just about there. . . . Who was right, Goethe or Gandhi?—or the *homme moyen sensuel*?

A man of good taste knows, a Chinese knows, that one cannot always display appetite, however one feels. Young girls become, as Galsworthy showed in a famous short piece in *Caravan*, very bored with old men who retain even decent lusts, decently managed lusts, too long. They expect them to “have done with that sort of thing”. Why, if it is so good? They pardoned Goethe his endless gallantries. But it required a Goethe to be indulged and pardoned.

A busy man, a responsible man, knows that to drink may be excellent; but that to drink too much or too often is not good. The more responsible he is the more he tends to restrict the upper limit of his norm of moderation. The soldier, the statesman, are often erotic men. But they, the great ones, are not uncontrolled. They can always decide, with Napoleon, that it will not be to-night. They are more than cavaliers of romance. They are sometimes soldiers of duty.

A well-educated man knows how to control his sensual appetites, to make them conform to the requirements of the art of living. He is quite capable of celibacy for long periods. There must be tens of thousands who, from temperament, matrimonial disappointment or duty, are celibate permanently. The accomplishment of avoiding women may be a right attitude or a wrong attitude; but it is not so very remarkable. But so very much depends upon whether this accomplishment arises from the mood of calculation and caution and fear, or from that of creative choice.

The spiritual man, who performs the works of the spirit, knows that although he can enrich himself with affection and human sympathy and requires a chosen companionship,

whether as follower or friend or teacher, he is led increasingly to replace the worship of sensual beauty of which he began by knowing the full pleasure, by the worship of a beauty of form, of the idea, a pleasure in the incarnate spirit, the active idea, even in the historic movement, as well as in every humble manifestation of the spirit of man. "I say and affirm that the lady, of whom I was enamoured after my first love, was the most beauteous and honourable daughter of the Emperor of the Universe, to whom Pythagoras gave the name of Philosophy"<sup>1</sup>—say rather, the Incarnate Wisdom, *hagia Sophia*.

In his *Autobiography* the Mahatma speaks of himself as a faithful but a lustful husband. It is probable that many of his Western readers cannot feel that they were ever stirred by as uncontrolled appetites as these to which the Mahatma, like the African Church Father St. Augustine, confesses. What a Western man has to be persuaded is, not that *brahmacharya* is practicable, but that in normal circumstances it is worth while. The Gospel records: "And one said, I have married a wife and cannot come." Faust, who had been himself a celibate, approached this teaching of the Mahatma's in a mood of questioning and doubt. He knew that most Westerners would approach it in a mood of repudiation and repugnance. It would seem to them barbaric, savage and "Early Christian". Nevertheless could not this teaching and this determination rightly be expected of the dedicated man?

The crisis of this age is to arrive at some new balance—or some new choice—between the Goethean-Chinese view of the civilized, the moderate, the well-mannered, the aristocratic, the urbane and talented in the conduct of existence, and the Christian, the Communist, the Tolstoian, Gandhian, pacifist rawness, roughness, fierceness, fanaticism, austerity, dedication to a super-existential object, more significant than the dance of life and the formal quadrille of polite society.

Those who are incapable of the great renunciations and dedication will not perceive the tragic elements in life, or humble themselves to lead the oppressed or, in the words of my Travancore friend, "understand pain". They will certainly

<sup>1</sup> "Dico e affermo che la Donna, di cui io innamorai appresso lo primo amore, fu la bellissima e onestissima figlia dello Imperadore dell' universo, alla quale Pittagora pose nome Filosofia." (Dante Alighieri: *Il Convito*, II, Ch. 16).

not be prepared, like the Mahatma, to undergo atoning fasting, make a perpetual sacrifice, endure "the little crucifixion". They will not be saints, although they may be admirably polished men of the world. They will not share with the Mahatma his prophetic and his Messianic quality.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In connection with this subject Mrs M. Graham Polak's book, *Mr. Gandhi: the Man* (Allen & Unwin, 1931), Chapter VIII, should be read. Its record of conversations with M. K. Gandhi will serve to emancipate the mind from any tendency, such as one finds in Romain Rolland, to regard the Mahatma's utterances and views as rather those of a demi-god than of a quite fallible man, whom an intelligent Scotswoman felt herself fully competent to challenge and contradict.

## CHAPTER XLVI

I READ ON a few more paragraphs in the same booklet, *Hind Swaraj*.

“Just as there is a necessity for chastity, so is there for poverty. Pecuniary ambition and passive resistance cannot well go together. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they *are* expected to be indifferent about it.”

Again, in the *Autobiography*, the Mahatma writes: “Words like *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *samabhava* (equability) gripped me. How to cultivate and preserve that equability was the question. How was one to treat alike insulting, insolent and corrupt officials; and co-workers of yesterday raising meaningless opposition; and men who had always been good to one? How was one to divest oneself of all possessions? . . . Was I to destroy all the cupboards of books that I had? Was I to give up all that I had and follow Him? Straight came the answer, I could not follow Him unless I give up all that I had. My study of English law came to my help . . . I understood more clearly in the light of the *Gita* teaching the implication of the word ‘trustee’.” This decision led to practical action, the use of future savings for the benefit of his Indian community.

How similar, once again, is the Mahatma’s position to the orthodox Christian doctrine of the trusteeship of wealth, so that the man who happens to have more than another (and this can happen even in the Soviet Union) owes a moral obligation in the disposal of his wealth in return for the gifts which are his by no action of his own and for the social help which enabled him to develop those gifts. And how similar is the Mahatma’s doctrine to that of St. John Chrysostom or St. Ambrose of Milan: “Let no man call his own what is common, for whatever is more than a competence is something taken and held from others.” So much for the voice of the early Church and of the mediæval West.

Can the modern West, which has travelled a long way since the days of St. Francis, be expected to believe in the virtue of

poverty or to be indifferent to wealth? Will it not rather agree with Bernard Shaw that it is a sin to be poor?

The most highly paid public relations officer in Britain, who was a lecturer on philosophy in Melbourne, has said: "The first essential in any approach to a group of people—a nation, a constituency or a market—is to meet them where they are." They feel insecure. They feel bored. They feel frustrated. They are lonely. And they are ignorant. Most emphatically they do not wish to be poor but, with the energy of panic fright, to escape from poverty.

The question between the philosopher of public advertising and the Mahatma is whether they should remain "where they are" and, if not, whether one should quite "meet them where they are". Indeed the life of man is "mean, nasty, brutish and short" in one aspect; but can it and should it be changed? And what is "mean and nasty"? Poverty—or absence of freedom?

The Mahatma's praise of poverty indicates a division between his thought and that of contemporary Western man deeper than the issue of monetary poverty itself.

The West desires, even when it does not respect, money—and this not only as a method of paying bills. It is a means of commanding an ever more expensive standard of material living remote from the Indian and his rice bowl. But it is more yet. In the eyes of competitors, women, family, it is the accepted measure of success in a capitalist society. And "success", as something dynamic—success without criticism of the end but merely as "what one went out for"—is something to be respected above all. Values may be relative and anarchic. But success is definite, depends upon opinion, and is in general measured by pay. For the Mahatma the permissible end is precise and is religious. For the West ends are multitudinous, but all means can be divided into two—successful and unsuccessful. Hitler, Napoleon and Stalin were successful. They were "touched by the wing of history".

Western man here has more justification than he, himself, is frequently aware. He has on his side the flesh and the world. The poor man lives a life which is dull and often even sordid, where the appetite for gratifications such as that of speed or influence remain unsatisfied. And if good doctrine is that which

meets people where they are, then the praise of poverty is undemocratic since it goes against the people's taste—as well as being reactionary, because it gives no encouragement to inventions to increase comfort.

When a man stands on the top, literally or symbolically, of a great tower like that of Radio City, Manhattan, and surveys the world beneath, then he feels a satisfaction of mixed power and beauty, almost a sexual satisfaction. When he is Hitler he feels a satisfaction as leader. The successful man finds that in nerve and brain and pulse of the blood he is a happier man and a more alive man. Full of confidence, he is nearer life; and the unsuccessful man is nearer death.

The Mahatma says: "Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend, or he who controls the death of others? . . . That nation is great which rests its head upon death as its pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear." Can any doctrine, it may be said, be more opposed to life, more anti-vital? What modern man, what young man and his girl, what young couple starting out in life—married, be it noted—can be expected to accept this joyless doctrine?

Lucifer took his throne on a high place and all the nations of the earth came to pay him honour and worship. Now Lucifer was named Success. This was clear to Faust. But Lucifer also desired to be called by, and worshipped under, another name, which was Life. But this was, perhaps, a false name.

All desire to be happy. This is a natural desire. But to be happy by success *tout court* means being happy without others considered as human beings, ends in themselves and not just aids to success. It means treading on the hands of others as one scrambles up the ladder of success. The Mahatma's "success" was that of service with imagination (and, in his own career, some luck, some technique as an editor), not of pushfulness. To be happy by dominative power means being happy against others. May it not then be true that a merely natural happiness for each, as of the successful baboon, can mean unhappiness for the other? It is, then, not right in life to aim at natural happiness. . . . Right living is indeed significant living, vital living, vivid living in full consciousness. But there is a wrong, as well as a right, vital and vivid living. "Living like a lord", "high



life", are forms of living to which the Mahatma offers no encouragement at all. Who shall say that he, like the Buddha, like the Christ, does not offer significant living ?

Consider the insecure, the bored, the frustrated, the lonely. Can they all become rich? Can all of them become richer than all the others? It is nonsense. Will the insecure, the bored, the frustrated, the lonely find satisfaction in having, under communism, the same as all the other bored and frustrated or just so much more as their piece-work warrants? What they require—and materialist communism illogically recognizes this just as the old idealistic monastic communism did—is a purpose in life beyond the equal or unequal wage. For the Mahatma they can all become *brahmachari*. And thereby they will, then, give a central significance to their lives. They can follow the discipline, and contribute to bringing the world into line. And those who have no vocation not to marry can still follow the discipline of poverty and detachment.

Does Gandhi think that all will become *brahmachari*, monks in the world? (For those, he says, who separate religion and politics "do not understand the meaning of religion"—how true!) Can all become *sannyasin*, poor men, devoted men, following *Il Poverello*? All could. But the Mahatma was brought up and lives in the functional Indian society. Some have a vocation to celibacy, devotion, leadership: others are not of this vanguard. Some have a vocation for poverty as a counsel of perfection although all must treat their wealth as held on trust as a moral law of obligation.

Anyhow all can be humble. And sobriety of living is one outward sign of humility. Again Gandhi is anti-Goethean, against "polite society". But as a seafaring man said to me in an English train: "Gandhi—yes, he is a great man. He is just as humble as when he began." No one would have said that of bourgeois patrician Goethe. Gandhi is not of the type of Faustian man. But Faust must meet the challenge of the saints, the challenge of the humble, poor in fact and spirit, to greed, ambition, "fine ways" and power—the *real* challenge of Margaret, who is not just there as a serving wench to save the souls of gentlemen when not waiting on table. *Ecce ancilla Domini*.

## CHAPTER XLVII

THE DOCTRINE of voluntary poverty is a fine doctrine but is it a convincing one? It does not mean, Gandhi says, being without possessions, but detachment. Shall we say that it means being content with studiously simple and modest means, and not being the slave even of these? It means that this is right at least for the few, the vanguard, the *brahmachari*; and that it sets a standard for the rest.

But has not all civilization been built upon the exact opposite basis—of demanding an ever higher standard of living, in which the ruling classes, the extravagant, those imperiously insistent upon luxury have pioneered the way? How else were rajas' palaces built, or the pyramids of the Pharaohs? And what are the modern community buildings of Soviet Russia, than the adaptation for all of standards of building once required by the few. (However, the mass of Russians are still poor men, very poor men.) The poor, it may be said, require not sympathy or philosophy, but change. Is it that the poor wish to be all rich? Or that fellow feeling is redundant? Or that we wish to build a balanced and sympathetic society of people without great differences of financial means, or only with differences clearly required by their function?

I recall a conversation with my friend Bronislav Malinowski, the anthropologist. He complained bitterly of the commercialization of modern life. He did not mean merely that success was in so many fields judged by the pay and the advertising, the brass band, the boloney, the blarney and the bally-hoo. He meant further that men's spiritual, mental, and cultural life was more and more twisted to the pattern of this kind of success.

M. K. Gandhi writes: "Civilization is not an incurable disease . . . We hold that civilization that you (the West) support to be the reverse of civilization. We consider our civilization to be far superior to yours." When Gandhi attacks civilization as the West has understood it, he means the same

thing as when the anthropologist Malinowski attacked what he called commercialization—seeing what the market will bear and meeting the customer in the market as he is, frustrated, lonely, success-worshipping and full of appetites, lascivious and asking to be entertained?

But we may ask: what is wrong with our appetites anyhow? What is wrong with business men making money by consulting the market or regarding as fools or hypocrites those who do not, or seem not, to push forward? Is it not enjoyable to advertise oneself if one succeeds? We are not all aristocrats, *sannyasin* or eaters of sour grapes. The philosophers—especially Spinoza, but not Hume—said we must control the appetites and passions of reason. Gandhi also says it. “A man who is swayed by emotions may have good enough intuitions, may be truthful in word, but he will never find the Truth.” But were the philosophers right? Plato said so; but would the “existentialists” say it to-day? Some, yes; some, no. Kierkegaard, yes; Sartre, no.

Again, from the point of view of Marxist Communism, what can be more contemptible, or smell more of social treason, than Mr. Gandhi’s appeal just to the moral conscience of individuals? “Salvation” will be by a movement, and what does the nature matter of the individuals who make up this Movement? The Mahatma attaches, unlike twentieth-century man, a fantastic degree of importance to whether these individuals are murderers or whether they are re-born and re-educated men, men trained in the holy *asceticism* or discipline. It is only by the Movement that the tyranny of capital, of capitalists, of wealthy exploiting men, of dividend-drawers will be broken. The goods of these parasites, the dividend-drawers, should be confiscated as Henry VIII confiscated without compensation the estates of the church. If they resist, they should be liquidated by the democratic proletarian masses led by the politically self-conscious few, the oligarchy of the orthodox. This system works. The Soviet peasant and worker remains poor and, too often, without comfort. The state does not fade away; and the commissar enjoys power tempered by this liquidation. But guns are added to guns.

“The abuses of the rich will only be cured by expropriation, liquidation, the tumbril and the salt-mines.” It is true that

England, without the French Revolution, advanced further in fifty years in democracy than France with it. But capitalism will not be cured constitutionally. When it is cured, managers will be paid ten or more than ten times the wage of unskilled workers, and the discontented worker will forfeit his food card. But the sons of manual workers will sit in managerial offices until the sons of these managers replace them. This will be justified by their work in contributing to build an efficient and successful community.

"The skill of life consists in being 'in' with the successful group. The successful group is usually coining money. Has Mr. Gandhi no wealthy friends? The willingness to enjoy sexual life to the full and the willingness to enjoy business success and wealth to the full usually spring from the same adventurous and masterful temperament. Has the Mahatma anything better, more vital, to offer? Is there not much to be said for a vital, fascist, bolshevik, successful, achieving life? And does not civilization owe much to this mood?"

It will not help us to say that achievement depends upon some measure of co-operation, even fascism on the *fascio* or bundle, national communism on the community. The question still remains: co-operation with whom and for what? Two incompatibles, Gandhi and Barnum, will not co-operate far.

The real issue is whether there are values so absolute that they, and not success or salesmanship or the achievement of imperial power, take charge of conduct, whatever the consequences. The real issue is whether the counter-values are not vulgar.

"But, if the vulgar is by etymology the popular, would it not be more democratic, more right-minded and more rewarding to presume that the popular is the good? Need the people be educated to values? Or is it right and in full possession of values by birth-right, anyway? Is it not impertinence to try 'to educate the masters'?" Even Rousseau did not say this last. *La volonté générale est toujours droite, mais son jugement n'est pas toujours éclairée*—"the general will," he said, "is always right, but its judgment is not always enlightened".

If there are no certain values, it is quite foolish to insist upon educating the people to them. If the only certain values are those of which the people approve in a given time and country,

then it is unnecessary to educate people in what they first decide themselves. But, if values are objective, and a few men know them singularly well, and these masters of keen sensitivity can educate the humble seekers among the rest—then this is a very different matter. Just making a pile ceases to be admirable; and the principles of trusteeship can be translated into law—for a trustee can be called to account and asked to give rational justification for his uses of property.

To return to the matter of money . . . Faust had met millionaires and men of great wealth, sometimes remarkable, more often not. Great wealth served to procure for them in both West and East respectful attention up to a point, not a very far point. It gave them comfort, convenience, power to move things, including themselves in travel, and sometimes to influence people. On the whole he was against it. Wealth, excess of money beyond simplicity, the needs of health and human dignity, was desirable if we could not do better, gain greater influence, by more subtle ways. The greatest recommendation for wealth was its power to surround one with beautiful things. It was well that beautiful things should be produced, not a middle-class mediocrity of taste nor yet a plutocrat's vulgarity and profusion. But there was no need to possess oneself the beautiful things, which could be beautiful fetters; but only to have the skill to appreciate them whether owned by oneself or others. Vulgar above all was the ostentation of wealth claiming some inherent superiority to simplicity and to those who plainly did plain duties.

Faust for himself could live very happily in a one room flat, with a window facing out to the sun. That was also the civilized life, as much as the necessary pomp of palaces and ministries. With a very few rare and beautiful things to give at times to those one loved. Or perhaps love, as it would be given, so also could be taken without even these symbols. Here, too, the Mahatma was right—or was the Mahatma the arch-hypocrite who by pacifist and pietist phrases deceived the workers of India?

India is poor—poor not with any voluntary poverty but with the grinding involuntary poverty that ends in starvation and undermined health. The poor are stricken with famine while millionaires gorge themselves. And then we are told that the

characteristic of Hinduism is charity (to animals?) and the Mahatma, in Travancore, tells his listeners that, if they are Moslems or Christians, they will nevertheless find the core of all religion in a *mantra* or verse of the *Upanishads* which exhorts them to dedicate all to God and to covet no man's goods. The starving wretch must not covet the mansion of the millionaire, and the millionaire must not covet the rags of the starving man . . . Is this the final economic wisdom of this holy man?

Let us pause for a minute. Did the Mahatma counsel that we should become millionaires? Did he encourage wealth, money-making, luxury, gorging? Then, is his offence that he advises people not to covet that which is not covetable; or that his assailants hate him for not coveting that which they do covet themselves—as Plato said, those who try, unrestrained by law and reason, to divide the spoils instead of abolishing the spoilers by abolishing the lust for spoliation? What then? That he does not attend to the elementary physical needs of his people? Why then the campaign for the spinning wheel, for agriculture, for village industry? Or can only an urban proletarian really be concerned to remove the ill health and malnutrition of slave conditions, slavery to want? Is the man whose vocation (as he says) is nursing, not concerned enough about health?

Or is it just that the Mahatma is a "reactionary" because he is sceptical of over-night urbanization, factory industrialization (as distinct from village industry), the class-war, and is not adopting the quickest means of progress to raise all to the car-radio-and-ice-cream standard? Here, indeed, is the Great Co-operator, not the Great Industrialist. Is the real rock of offence that the apostle of non-violence does not wage the class-war, is too slow in his tempo of change? Gandhi is a socialist of the school of Ruskin and Morris: "I was a socialist before he was born," he said of J. P. Narain. But this raises questions of the desirable structure of civilization, quite separate from M. K. Gandhi's approach in his criticism of unrestricted capitalism and in his programme for a healthy life in a new, more equal India with its new village communities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Humayun Kabir: *Our Heritage*, pt. 3 (National Information and Publications Ltd., Bombay).

The Mahatma's notion of civilization may be wrong in this age of electricity. Just that is our problem. But his notions of riches and poverty, which are as old as Plato's—although in their development, as we shall see, perhaps rather freer—are not wrong. The Yogi will not be as well paid as the Commissar. Some will say (and Gandhi will not deny) that this is because the Yogi is not as useful to the Government. The Mahatma does not favour this form of payment, "to each in accordance with his contribution". According to this labourer for the oppressed, payment should be in accordance with each man's modest human needs. And those to whom society allocates more—as it will not to its real rulers, its *sannyasin*—these owe their superfluity to their fellows, to be treated as a trust. It is a trust for which they may be held to account. And the Mahatma has nowhere said that by society they should not be held to account, as St. Ambrose said that they should be held to account even to the utmost farthing, if they would not be cursed dead with the curse that fell on Ananias and Sapphira.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

*Hind Swaraj* states a third principle underlying non-violence, *ahimsa*. That principle is courage. "Passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness."

This may seem like a truism. And a truism of which the significance can be exaggerated. As Confucius says: brigands and other lawless men show courage. So do Bolsheviks, Nazis and Fascists, as well as partisans and patriots. It is no infallible moral argument for a cause that courage is shown by its agents. Many men think very bad things, including their own excessive power, to be worth fighting for. Fearlessness is a good thing, considered by itself. But is it so important a thing as the Mahatma here pretends?

A life of discipline requires physical courage. But the Mahatma's chief concern here is with moral courage. The subjects of tyranny often display the highest physical courage to fight. What they lack is moral courage to resist.

There is a "moral" reason for this lack of moral courage. For many people the "moral" is that which follows the *mores*, the customs and conventions. They hate to be "uncustomary", isolated and peculiar. They are rightly afraid of being thought egotists and exhibitionists. And they lack the basis in reason which enables one to distinguish eccentricity from a reasoned and sober protest against evil sitting in high places.

It all comes back again to the earlier principles of *brahmacharya*. A young man who has married, or hopes to marry, has given hostages. There are many risks that he will be unwilling to run—not only of physical harm to his family but of damage to his career and prospects. Already he is half a coward. First of all he becomes afraid of being poor. It is only when he has dissociated himself from dependence on wealth and perhaps at need even from the customary claims of his family, that he can begin to stop worrying about success and what other people may think in whose power it lies to promote him.



The best guide in the matters is example. In his autobiography, so characteristically called *My Experiments with Truth*—better “Truth’s Experiments with me”—we learn how M. K. Gandhi conducted himself. Once, on the instruction of an elder brother, he went to a local British officer in his native Gujerat, asking for a favour for that brother. He received a rebuff which he never forgot. From then on, despite a tolerant willingness for compromise and a temperamental preference for negotiation, he asked no favours and abated no just claims. He stripped himself like an athlete—the old Christian comparison—for the moral struggle.

When he went out to South Africa he did not take his family and he remained there for many months as the champion of the Indians of Natal without asking that the members of his family should come overseas to join him. When they did come, all landed in Durban to face a population which, had it not been for the interventions of the police commissioner, would have lynched him. Here was no leader marching at the head of his adherents (or sitting in an office in the rear), but one man confronting alone both violence and conventional opinion. Throughout the period of his service in South Africa on behalf of the political and industrial rights of the Indian immigrants, although not a man with private means, he yet lived on such lawyer’s briefs as came his way without receiving a salary for his services. Even gifts of gold and jewels, showered on him as a recognition of his services before he left South Africa in 1907, he turned over to a trust fund to be used for public purposes. This was courage—courage to go contrary to the general opinion of what it would have been quite legitimate for him to do for his family advantage; courage “to burn his boats” and even to go contrary to the legitimate opinion of his family.

Not unnaturally his wife protested against his quixotism. Was he not a faddist who sacrificed his children’s regular education to his plans? Would not his daughter some day like to have those gifts as part of her wedding dowry?<sup>1</sup> Would he leave his family in the gutter? Was he the kind of man who could be counted upon to provide for them?

<sup>1</sup> These arguments M. K. Gandhi records were used by his wife at the time. Actually they never had a daughter, although he persuaded his wife to adopt an outcaste child.

What here was courage? What here was egotism? There is an obligation for those who marry to provide for their children. Perhaps Gandhi should never have married. It is one of the evil consequences of the Indian system of child marriage, now, fortunately, becoming more rare, that he did not so much marry as was married by his parents. But, if there is an obligation to provide for children, there is no obligation to provide for them better than other people's children, if this involves prostituting superior powers for purposes incongruous with the major drives of one's own personality. The future proved M. K. Gandhi's decision right. But it was not success that proved him right. There is never a *duty* to subordinate public causes to private ends, once the minimal obligations have been fulfilled such as any husband owes to any wife and any parent to any child. The man who has the capacity to serve public ends has no obligation to subject himself to the social ambitions of others. And the decision to refuse to do this is not egotism, but it may be courage. Nevertheless courage, moral as well as physical, to distinguish itself from eccentricity, must be prepared to test its purposes by the test of reason and discussion.

Conscience itself is not something absolute, but something subject to God and involving an obligation to be informed as well and fully as it lies in one's power. There is a duty to keep the windows of knowledge and information open. Otherwise conscience and private judgement, and courage to give effect to these, degenerate into a mulish and unpleasing obstinacy shaped, positively and in reaction, by the way one was brought up in childhood.

Mohandas Gandhi by example preaches, like Socrates, the pitting, in crisis and searching, of our rational and informed conscience, our principles, against the conventions, the majority opinion, even the society will of the moment. He does this, not to end as an individualist, but to develop a new society of more mature *persons*, thanks to the teaching. As a good Hindu he acknowledges fully—as fully as did Socrates' great disciple, Plato—the dependence of the individual upon the cosmos, the influence of the society, with its *dharma* or functional predestination, upon the individual. But the distinction of the Mahatma lies in his balancing belief (also Hindu, also Platonic)

that the society will be that which its members make it; and that lasting reform must be also personal, moral, emanating from the re-educated person. The great social movement is not the mechanical party whipping in its members; but the work of the educator, the emotional and moral educator, religion, the wide concern for the human person and its dignity. To follow the true *guru*, the Master, the teacher, at however great costs; to search with the candlelight of conscience, like Diogenes of old, until one has found the doorway to the brilliant halls of truth, until one has found the torch-bearer and guide; to follow obstinately, persistently, inflexibly—this is true valour, this is courage.

It is not enough to be a theorist, a man of pious phrases. It is necessary to translate principles into action. This requires courage. Courage is the watchword for the practical life of the *satyagrahi*. And, as much as for any Marxist, there must be a *practical* life, a life of works shaped by charity, if moved by faith.

## CHAPTER XLIX

THE FOURTH, and last, principle enunciated in *Hind Swaraj* as a condition in the practice of *ahimsa*, is devotion to truth. The old three monastic rules of the West were chastity, poverty and obedience. The Mahatma does not fail to instil, as a moral duty, humility before right authority. But he enquires into the warrant of the authority, which is truth; and into the moral quality of the disciple, which is courage. The *satyagrahi* must be "steadfast in truth", as the name means. There is an absolute value of truth, of non-hypocrisy, of emotional as of intellectual honesty. There are, in brief, absolute values.

"Passive resistance has been described in the course of our discussion as truth-force. Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed and that at any cost. In this connection, academic questions such as whether a man may not lie in order to save a life, etc., arise, but these questions occur only to those who wish to justify lying. Those who want to follow truth every time are not placed in such a quandary; and if they are, they are still saved from a false position."

Devotion to truth supplies a director which regulates the outlets in the exercise of courage. But by truth we mean something more here than the reiteration of the fact that a photograph is a likeness of John and not of Tom. This truth of fact is a convenience in distinction. But there is no reason higher than convenience why we should uphold it and, so, if inconvenient, we could well repudiate it.

Is truth a good? Is truth an imperative? These are questions—questions of "the truths of value"—that cut deeper than any mere "theory of truth as a copy", or that if  $A=B$  and  $B=C$ , then  $A=C$ . This last explains not at all the virtue in integrity or the connection between truth and integrity. The importance of truth is in part a matter of power over nature. It is in part a matter of confidence in man, non-deception, good will, the aesthetic quality of integrity.

If a man says one thing and means another, how shall we get into touch with him? If we cannot rely upon men, how is human community and trust possible? A man of integrity is all of a piece: what he says he also thinks, and upon what he thinks he will also act and conduct himself. He seems as he is. This is the ideal of the man of integrity. It rests on the belief that a man should learn to respect the reality without him and should express clearly the vision that is within him. The opposite is the belief that a man can evade this reality for his private ends or pleasure, and then can achieve his ends by concealing from his neighbours his evasion. Courage, integrity, beauty and truth are therefore plainly connected by an inherent bond.

Truth and that incarnation of habitual truth which we call integrity may be excellent things. But is there any obligation to keep to truth when it is unpleasant or inconvenient? Is it not "true" that the good is the successful? What is obligation? Above all, what is obligation except to do what suits the convenience of one's society or nation, if not oneself?

Let us reflect, however, for a moment upon this. We are being told to-day that "truth is good, *but*—only so far as it is a convenience to some particular society". Or, in the words of one Soviet writer: "Objective truth is treason in war-time." Man's respect for "what actually is so" is subordinate to the security of his society, his particular society in a given time and place. This, in effect, means subordinate to the rulings of the government in that time and place. Obligation to society is something which sounds well, as though it might take precedence of truth; but this security of society may in the end mean no more than "the security of the regime". And this may be a regime of thugs and gunmen. In the last analysis, truth is being subordinated to the desire of gunmen to keep safe their own necks. This is a contemptible and cowardly rendering to Caesar of the things that are God's.

The issue is clear enough. Are there "things of God"? Truth and the duty to express it provide as good a case as any. Or are there only "things of Caesar", expediences of a particular society, good or bad? Or is there only for me my own convenience and success, which I usually find consists in at least seeming to fit in with society?

The first of these positions is Gandhi's. The moral evolutionists incline to the second. Everything grew up, moral values included, and it will all change again as tribes give way to some other kind of society, as the human herd slowly changes its physical habitation and social shape, and finds new needs and things to approve. I, myself, feel that, as between the second and the third, the third position is far more logical and satisfactory. "A man only lives once. Why wait for the stupid herd? There either is moral obligation or there is not, as something final. There are either values that stand above man and support or condemn him by a law written in his own nature—or there are not. If not, why suit the convenience of the mass and why not be intelligent enough to use the mass for one's own convenience? If one is not intelligent enough, then one must accept the issue of the war for survival between the intelligent and the unintelligent. As Nietzsche points out—here introducing another final value—"from the point of view of the race", it is probably better that the more intelligent (or the better stock, if we can distinguish this) win. And, of course, if we are up against things our "duty", i.e. our intelligent self-interest, is to outwit the thugs unless they play, for their convenience, a game convenient to oneself."

Convenient in what? In giving one wealth, publicity, power, glory? And do these satisfy?

Certainly, yes. There is something in them that satisfies immensely according to "the law of our members". Whose pulse does not beat faster when he knows he is famous? Who is hypocrite enough to deny the satisfaction he could get from power and glory, *his* power (not "the Government's") and *his* glory? He appeals to the judgement of history; and he knows that history has taken note of him. Will Napoleon be forgotten, Ghenghis or Hitler, Trotsky or Stalin?

Yet there is a certain dissatisfaction. History notes and also judges. Napoleon apologizes on St. Helena, as he writes his *Memoirs*. It is a dissatisfaction that M. K. Gandhi will not share. There is an outer and an inner judge. The soul of the tyrant, said Plato, is sodden with fear.

But what of the tyrants who think themselves saviours? Was Hitler indeed so happy? Is Stalin? Can Stalin be mentioned in the same breath with Gandhi as a benefactor of humanity?

If not the inner, then the outer judge will know that there was something unsatisfied and unfulfilled. And when the outer judge has spoken, the inner judge will reflect.

What, then, does Gandhi mean by truth, truth with a capital "T"? Why does he make it so central to his philosophy? Because he puts it into polar antithesis to convenience, individual or social. Even the convenience of India and its freedom he explicitly says he will subordinate to this Truth. "I have striven all my life for the liberation of India. But if I can get it only by violence I would not want it." It is not true, but a lie, that violence is the good route. As to the Communists, "it seems that they do not make any distinction between fair and foul, between truth and falsehood. They deny the charge but their reported acts seem to sustain it".<sup>1</sup>

It is all part of his philosophy of the humble man. The duty to be truthful is my duty to pay scrupulous homage to the reality which is so much greater and more significant than myself, and to report accurately its voice and lineaments. Truth is loyalty in word and thought towards what *is*. God is reality, What *Is*, under the species of value. "I am that I Am". Truth then is the reporting of reality undistorted by self-interestedness: it stamps the integrity of an honest man. It involves the courage to be obscure and to overcome the final appetite—for worldly immortality. It is pure reflection of the spirit of God as articulate Word, and repudiation of what distorts this mirrored image. All human power and hope depends upon fidelity to the spirit of what actually is. It is the gospel of scientist, scholar, sage and saint alike. It is the corner-stone of disinterestedness—of what the Buddhists call *upekkha*, "the higher indifference".

Nowhere does the Mahatma more fully express his religious philosophy, which enables him to enter into communion with the essence of all religions, to grasp the mystic truth which, as Jacques Maritain says, is genuine in all, than here. "I am an untouchable. I am a Hindu, I am a Moslem, a Christian, a Jew, a Buddhist." "I think it wrong to expect certainties in this world where all else but God that is Truth is an uncertainty. All that appears and happens about and around us is uncertain, transient. But there is a Supreme Being hidden

<sup>1</sup> Louis Fischer: *Gandhi and Stalin*, p. 38.

therein as a Certainty, and one would be blessed if one could catch a glimpse of that Certainty and hitch one's waggon to it. The quest for that Truth is the *summum bonum* of life." "I have not seen Him neither have I known Him. I have made the world's faith in God my own, and as my faith is ineffaceable, I regard that faith as amounting to experience. However, as it may be said that to describe faith as experience is to tamper with truth, it may perhaps be more correct to say that I have no word for characterizing my belief in God."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. M. K. Gandhi: *Christian Missions—their place in India*.



## CHAPTER L

GANDHI's religious philosophy is a challenge both to American civilization and to Soviet society as it actually is. It is a challenge to the Soviet system as a secularist cult of power for the dictators of the proletariat. It is a challenge to the West, less radical but perhaps even more wide-spread. It is the difference, it may be, between the challenge to an avowed foe and to a half-friend. The Yogi, of course, confronts the Commissar. But the Yogi also confronts the merry-go-round, with Go-Getter and Good-Timer, of the empty-headed West. The Yogi has much less patience with economic selfishness than with economic communism. But he is opposed to both species of power-lust, the planned and the unplanned.

"That nation is great which rests its head upon death as its pillow." The inordinate happiness of one, at the natural level, is inconsistent with the happiness of others. Happiness, therefore, is not the goal of life; but "right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right contemplation", the Eightfold Path as the Buddha said.

Obviously there is a religious happiness, a peace of mind, which is not of the "natural" or "un-re-educated", unreformed order. Obviously again, even the keen airman, the tough brigand, the fanatical fascist can understand that one will get more out of life, in some ways, if one has "death for one's pillow". Man's conquest of the stars, all the greatest achievements involving superhuman risks, rest upon such a pact. But this pact is too frequently a pact entered into for the sake of power. And of power, not only over things, but over men—dominative power.

It is against this design for life, and this lust for power, that the Mahatma protests. He protests against it even more than against the aimless, brainless pursuit of pleasure. He sees in it the characteristic stamp of Western civilization, "Sovietic" as well as "capitalist". That is why he writes: "I had

described Western civilization as being, unlike Eastern, predominantly based on force."

Gandhi's reaction against "civilization", *scil.* "Western civilization", it may be suspected, owes more to Tolstoy than to Edward Carpenter or J. J. Rousseau. Much in the impassioned Russian, the baron turned peasant or *moujik*, perfectly appealed to him. What is often represented as Gandhi's "Oriental *fakir*" quality, which makes him "unacceptable to the West", is no other than his Western Tolstoyan quality which he has imported into India to Rabindranath Tagore's aristocratic horror. But it is Thomas Mann who suggests that Count Tolstoy was not perhaps really quite sincere, when he reacted against the luxury of civilization, in his pacifism and asceticism. He covertly pampered a very pagan sensual nature instead of reshaping it with Christian single-mindedness. Rather this asceticism was a compensation for, a luxury of remorse for, a sensuality in which he allowed himself more than an occasional *moujik* debauch. He had odd reservations. However this may be, with Gandhi the integrity, the "natural Christianity", is complete. And thereby he comes nearer than Tolstoy ever did to the great tradition of monk, and *sannyasin*, in both West and East. Whereas Tolstoy reacts towards primitive life, Gandhi reacts towards the simple life—which is very different indeed.

Gandhi is certainly not unique in preferring the village life to the metropolis. In objecting to the concentration of humanity in vast "wens" of population he is in line with the modern town and country planners, like Mumford. In advocating the machine which one man can manage instead of dependence upon heavy industry, he keeps company (as in so many ways) with Aldous Huxley and Gill and Murry. In fearing for his people if they are rapidly industrialized and thrust into factories, he is only echoing the sentiments of Blake about "these dark Satanic mills", and advocating the precautions which the whole Socialist movement endorsed until the arrival of the Commissars, who can make a peasant into a factory robot in nine months and liquidate him in nine days. There is really nothing very remarkable in Mr. Gandhi's views on all this except that he prefers to improve the old India rather than to start a new, and refuses to be hustled and

boondoggled by the prospectors of Western civilization into abandoning the old Indian civilization for a neon-lighted heaven of speed, machinery and modern comforts, incensed by the stink of petrol.

On the contrary, far from being merely "cussed", Mohandas Gandhi has put his finger on what really is the sore of Western life, the obscene worship of what William James called "the bitch goddess Success", the prostration of men in the temples of the Rimmon of Power and the State-Behemoth. And the explanation of these things, he says, is *not economic but psychological*. It is not hunger or shortage. It is fear and the aggressiveness of the insecure soul, the suspicious soul. The Mahatma is a living refutation of the belief that only he can get through life who "looks after number one"; and who wages the skin game of the class war or tribe war or war of all against all, "man being to man a wolf". He is the hero of the anti-class-war on behalf of humanity, which knows at core no class.

■ The object of Gandhism is to end that fear and that suspicion, which takes shape as the aggressiveness of the individual and the neurosis of a civilization, by extirpating its very root. It offers a psychology which is also a discipline and a religion, casting out fear with courage. It offers a light yoke to those who will learn its lessons. It offers peace of mind to the pure in heart, and to the simple that they will not be put to shame. *Et deposuit potentes de sede*. The bare feet of the humble have put down the mighty, and a simple purpose has exalted them of low degree.

## CHAPTER LI

WHAT EMERGES from all this is the picture of the Mahatma as a great Indian figure who understands authentically the Indian peasant with whom he has identified himself; and yet an Indian figure in full reaction and protest against the conservative naturalism of the Hinduism popular in his day. Orthodox Hinduism, with its immemorial castes, its drama of the dance of life and death, its acceptance of the amoral immensities of the universe above, below and within us, is the religion of the sons of the nature-gods. The nature-gods give an earthly power, a power of the intuition, but in return allow no questions. His Highness of Jaipur and the famine-haunted *sudra* are alike facts in their eyes, facts which are but the latest expressions in the cycle of recurrence of what has always been. Doubtless the good *sudra* can be rewarded by becoming, on reincarnation, Maharaja of Jaipur. But there will be new *sudras* to take his place and bear the toil.

Over against this stands the Mahatma, offering like the Buddha salvation to all through truth. What are the influences which have produced this new vision? I think we must say, first of all Tolstoy, and then the Western ideas which Gandhi absorbed in early manhood.

It is important to notice the attitude of "the holy man of India" to the contemporary popular religion of his country. He protests himself to be an orthodox Hindu—and shows his strength precisely by his insistence on identifying himself with historical and institutional religion, not as an individualistic eccentric without historic or social sense, an "other-worldly" improver who separates himself from the politico-social movement. But there is the other side.

The great leaders of India, the Buddha no less than M.K. Gandhi, have been men in reaction against the popular tendencies of their times. The Buddha was in reaction against the caste Phariseism of the Brahmins, against salvation by the ritual performance of Vedic rites. M.K. Gandhi is in reaction,

not only against this same caste system, but also against the sensuality and indeed vulgarity of popular religion. He is the popular Indian leader who stands over against, and in opposition to, the popular religion.

This emerges clearly enough in his *Autobiography*. It was rather the Puritan Brahmo-samaj that attracted him. Himself by ancestry a Vishnu-worshipper, he is clearly shocked by the popular worship of Siva's consort, Kali. "We passed on to the temple. We were greeted by rivers of blood. I could not bear to stand there. I was exasperated and restless. I have never forgotten that sight . . . I thought of the story of Buddha, but I also saw that the task was beyond my capacity. I hold to-day the same opinion as I held then. It is my constant prayer that there may be born on earth some 'great spirit', man or woman, who will . . . purify the temple. How is it that Bengal with all its knowledge, intelligence, sacrifice and emotion tolerates this slaughter? The terrible sacrifice offered to Kali in the name of religion enhanced my desire to know Bengal life."

"I have never thought of frequenting places of pilgrimage in search of piety . . . The swarm of *Saddhus* (holy men), who had descended there, seemed to have been born but to enjoy the good things of life." "If anyone doubts the infinite mercy of God, let him have a look at these sacred places. How much hypocrisy and irreligion does the Prince of Yogis suffer to be perpetrated in His holy name? He proclaimed long ago, 'Whatever man sows, that shall he reap.' The law of Karma is inexorable and impossible of evasion."

In the new *Ashram* at Wardha was a recluse, Bhansali, who argued that he should exempt himself from labour in order to cultivate meditation, an orthodox enough Hindu position as we have learned in Pondicherry. Gandhi's reply to Bhansali was short with the emphasis of an epigram. "Meditation and worship are not things like jewels to be kept locked up in a strong box. They must be seen in every act." His attitude is that of Tilak, in his commentary on the *Gita*, that meditation must lead out to the act.

Gandhi I have compared with Tolstoy. The Mahatma is indeed far more authentic than Tolstoy in the sense that he is all of a piece. However this may be, this I will affirm:

that the Mahatma is at least as much the apostle of the West to India as, what he is believed to be, the apostle of India to the West. But the Christian West, not the West of Bismarck and Marx, Hitler and Stalin. And, therefore, no more Western than was Christ or Peter or Paul or Moses. "Jesus," the Mahatma is always fond of reiterating, "was an Asiatic." The Mahatma, apparently the very incarnation of one civilization, is indeed the uniter, the interpreter, the child of the two—the world figure. He neither begins nor ends with the Indian scene.

He is, in one sense, the greatest living Christian—more Christian than Socrates ever was. And yet he is sufficiently Indian not to be a Christian, because he cannot bring himself to believe in only one *avatar*, an archetype without reincarnation and unique because archetype.

To the pragmatic Western man the debate may seem to be one of words—whether the Almighty can send incarnate God to man once or more often, and whether He who had prototypes could have successors—but to the Indian, as to the orthodox theologian, it is a real issue. Not "is Christ truly God?" but "why should not there be more Christ-gods or Krishna-gods, springing from the womb of history, the belly of Vishnu?" The stumbling block for the Occident, which prefers to see the divine as human and is deeply Arian in its heresies, is the reverse of the stumbling block of the Orient, which easily sees the human as divine, and is deeply monophysite in its heresies.

How Indian and yet how Christian are Gandhi's chief recommendations for the life of the *Brahmachari*. And yet how un-Indian are his moralistic preoccupations, his crusades, which remind one more of the social worker than of the Eastern religious and, if of such at all, then more of the religious of Islam than of Benares. His pacifism, I have said, is more Christian, Buddhist or Jain than Hindu, and is a bold new interpretation of "acceptance", of *ahimsa*, in Hinduism. In orthodox Hinduism non-combativeness is more a caste attitude of certain castes.

He is the world figure. And what does all his gospel amount to in the West? Poverty, chastity, truthfulness, passive resistance to evil, rural economy. Dull, how dull, how dull!

Half monkery, half Rousseauism! Half reaction, half Salvationism! So the Average Adjuster, Faust reflected, had always said . . . Is there here anything to confront and subdue the power impulse of the West? If one is to look to the East, is not Confucius or Lao-tse better, with the Chinese humour and ability either to appreciate a polished civilization or to leave it without regret or desire to reform it? Or why not stay with the West, and still see in Goethe the exemplar of Western culture, its problems and its mode of compromise and of living?

The fundamental problem of civilization is the old one: to balance the static or more precisely the cyclic, the classical, the Jovian, the law, against the dynamic, the romantic, the Apollonian or Dionysiac, the free spirit. How admirable is the ritual of the seasons, the humour of the civilized life, the calm Goethean balance, the classic repose. But we live to-day in the second Age of the Tyrants. The starving masses of India, the Communist fervour or Fascist fanaticism of Europe, cannot be put off with talk of culture! The old rich culture is there and expresses itself in a myriad ways. It will outlast the present discontents. But neither the polish of Goethe in the West nor the dances of Uday Shankhar or of Ram Gopal in the East will give us the answers we now have to find. We have not to adopt Tolstoy's ferocious antagonism to the arts, his barbaric moralism, in order to admit at least this. Nor, again, shall we get the answers from mere "social reformism", with its superficial, mechanical views of human nature.

The gospel of Gandhi, the little poor man in the outcaste's *ashram*, the indirect ruler of India, is a gospel which can be understood by peasants and workers. Because it preaches, to those who have the vocation to follow, simple, hard things such as poverty, chastity and truth, which a child can understand but which only a courageous man will practise, therefore millions of simple men are prepared to accept, or at least to respect, its discipline and to acclaim its apostle as *mahatma*. And yet this gospel belongs to a tradition so old and subtle that it can appeal to the most exacting and the most scrupulous minds. For it invites them to a bold adventure in truth, courageously carried into practice in the kingdom of this world in order to re-educate it and reshape it. It sets itself into polar

opposition to the gospel of class-violence, the abstract, inhuman antithesis and fierce world-view of Marxism, in the name of a deeper insight, a more profound, and indeed more scientific, psychology. It invites the scientist to re-examine human psychology and the politician to give effect to the conclusions.

To the honest mind some of the conclusions of Gandhism about abstention from force have seemed incomplete, far-fetched and unwarranted by truth. This created a problem in Gandhism to which, as yet, I had no answer. But I did not doubt that (as Louis Fischer later was to say)<sup>1</sup> here we had the third force, more than conventional, but neither Nietzschean-Fascist nor Marxian-Communist, which could resolve the major crisis of the age by mass appeal to individuals, by deliberate re-education of individuals, by a return to that affirmation of elementary uncomplicated values, the simple human values upon which civilization reposes and all humanistic culture, but which the age, racing from materialism into violence, has lost.

This gospel begins with the practice of peace, from whence flow the possibilities of freedom and social justice; but it sees in peace no material thing, but the outward sign of the spirit of charity. It continues by preaching the discipline of charity, and that "conversion of habits" which springs from accepting it. It is a discipline which refuses, save in a choice of evils, to subordinate the means of civilization to the ends of some smaller advantage. Its systematic belief in the spirit of charity is its fundamental act of faith.

It is the most startling expression existing to-day of the religious spirit. It takes conventional Christianity, no less than conventional Hinduism and secular Socialism, by the shoulders and shakes it. It is also the most successful expression in that it achieves its ends on the grand historic scale and yet, just where it has been most fully applied, there it has most conspicuously avoided sprinkling the earth, like Stalinist and Hitlerite, with human blood.

<sup>1</sup> Louis Fischer: *Gandhi and Stalin*, Harpers, 1947.



## CHAPTER LII

GANDHI, however, goes beyond his criticism with insight of Western civilization as rotten with love of power. He goes on to denounce, along with this and with commercialization and the vulgar love of conspicuous consumption, the Machine Age as such. It was for this that he was criticized by Gokhale; and one cannot help feeling that Gokhale was right. Gandhi in effect admitted this by subsequent explanations tantamount to recantations.

Here Gandhi "goes off the rails", tempted in *Hind Swaraj* to indulge in emotions of a machine-smashing Luddite or rather in the paradox of Rousseau in the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*, which made Jean Jacques' name famous . . . as a sophisticated prize-winner. That is, Gandhi has "gone off the rails" of sound judgement, if his too dramatic remarks are to be taken literally: if the man who owed his life to an operation really meant all he said about Western medicine; and if the man who travelled across India by train quite meant what he said about fast locomotion; and the apostle of that little machine, the spinning wheel, with his head cropped by barber's mechanical clippers, meant all he said about machines. And if he did not mean these things by way of parable and protest.

If Gandhi meant all he said, we should be tempted to reply to him in the words of Voltaire to Rousseau: "I have received your new book against the human race. . . . Never was such cleverness used in the design of making us all stupid. One longs in reading your book to walk on all fours." "I feel," writes Gandhi, "that, if India would discard 'modern civilization', she can only gain by doing so." Here speaks the Indian nationalist, whose burning of foreign cloth irritated Tagore. Here also speaks the Savonarola of reform. But "modern civilization" is written in quotation marks. What just does Gandhi mean here? Is he guilty, as Delisle Burns suggested, of the fundamental error of regarding "as morally evil any instrument which may be misused"? Sometimes indeed

Gandhi talks that way, just as he talks like a Plato about the pampering of the body by medicine.

Lawyers are bad, he says, because they stir quarrels and live by them. Physicians are bad "because they induce us to indulge", instead of living in accordance with nature. They charge exorbitant fees. Railways accentuate the evil nature of men, by enabling bad men and racketeers to go about their evil errands more quickly than they could in the days when escape was by bullock cart. Machinery is bad. Even English villages are free of it. But to-day India's very gods are images "made in Germany". "It would be folly to assume that an Indian Rockefeller would be better than the American Rockefeller. Impoverished India can become free, but it will be hard for any India made rich through immorality to regain its freedom. I fear that we shall have to admit that moneyed men support British rule." "Ideally I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body which is not helpful to salvation."

This is all fine Ruskin-Tolstoyan rhodomontade by a lawyer with a printing press—a good prize essay. But what does Gandhi, the responsible teacher, in fact mean? Let him explain.

"How can I be against all machinery when I know that even this body is a most delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the open streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind but *for all*. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. To-day machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it all is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might. . . . The machine should not tend to atrophy the limbs of man. . . . Factories run by power-driven machinery should be nationalized, State-controlled. . . . *The supreme consideration is man.*"

The Mahatma would keep the emphasis in India on the village rather than the town. Gandhi's advocacy of spinning

and weaving as a simple step for the revival of village industry has often been misunderstood. "If we could have electricity in every village home, I should not mind the villagers plying their instruments and tools with the help of electricity. But then the village communities or the State would own power houses, just as the villages have their grazing pastures. But where there is not electricity and no machinery, what are idle hands to do? Will you give them work or would you have their owners cut them down for want of work? I would prize every invention of science made for the benefit of all. There is a difference between invention and invention. I should not care for the asphyxiating gases capable of killing masses of men at a time. The heavy machinery for work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place, but all that would be owned by the State and used entirely for the benefit of the people."<sup>1</sup>

As for the spinning wheel, "the sole claim advanced on its behalf is that it alone offers an immediate practicable and permanent solution of the problem of problems that confronts India—namely the enforced idleness for nearly six months in the year of an overwhelming majority of India's population, owing to lack of a suitable occupation supplementary to agriculture and the chronic starvation of the masses that results therefrom."

The Mahatma presents us with a new pattern of civilization adapted from the old. Heavy industry, the giant factory and its social conditions, no longer occupies the foreground. Admittedly so far as power plants are used, such as Gandhi contemplates, the problem of controls and human freedom remains. But primarily he places in the foreground the self-sufficient small group, the genuine face-to-face community and *its* appropriate manner of life, agriculture, weaving, fishing, with their human skills, not the factory and the assembly-line and the robot. Civilization is not the machine. Civilization means, translated into Gujarati, "good conduct", and so it means still to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

His views on civilization may seem exaggerated and even eccentric. They certainly troubled the good international humanist, Tagore. And yet, Gandhi, Indianizing Indian

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Humayun Kabir, *op. cit.*; and Aldous Huxley: *Ways and Means*.

although he sometimes is, always remains the good internationalist—orthodox Hindu, untouchable, Moslem, Jain, Christian, Parsi, Buddhist, as he once described himself in words reminiscent of the *Ballad for Americans* of John Latouche and Paul Robeson. What Gandhi does do, with the intuition of genius, is to go to the core of the doubt in our civilization. The machine is neither good in itself nor bad in itself. But it has become the symbol of something beyond itself as much as any image in a Siva temple is the symbol of natural fertility. The symbolism of the Machine Age, the symbolism of Manhattan, is as emphatically such, as the symbolism of the *lingam*. It is the symbolism of power and of intoxication with power.

The doubt and debate in our civilization is whether power, power over nature first but then power over man as a natural object, is not only good but the great human good; the distinctively human thing which no animal can rival. This is a power to work miracles in the wilderness, to transform elements from air and water, to defy gravitation and outpace sound. It is the fantastic power of knowledge, which can gather together people from all nations to build a Tower of Babel which shall defy in its pride all comers and all nature. And the question is whether this immeasurable power of the spirit and mind of man over things and over his fellows, treated as things, is or is not the final, distinctive human power, the great good because the peculiarly human good. Against this the Mahatma dares to place humility, the humble and the contrite heart, and the kingdom of ends and values.

This is his gospel: that the spirit of *ahimsa*, which is charity, is as more important than machines as ends are more important; and as the values, which adjudge our means, are more important than the means themselves. The means may be good, neutral or bad according to their conformity to imperatives higher than the claims of these means to be used—higher because their denial repudiates the divine in man, for the sake of the worship from pride of the lord of this world, and of power, and of the Prince of the power of the air (which is the primal atomic energy) and of darkness. Power without humanity is the final devilry.

## CHAPTER LIII

WHAT is *ahimsa*? It is, for Gandhi, more than merely "non-violence" or abstinence from class violence or national violence. It is a disciplined attitude of mind on the part of those "steadfast in truth", an expression of charity. It has little to do with the "material comforts of peace". It is the consequence of a philosophy. It is the keystone of practice in the life of the warrior of God, the protagonist of reason against violence, good-will against hate.

*Ahimsa* is based on the proposition that violence leads to more violence, hate to more hate, the arbitrary use of power "for a good cause" to the growing lust for tyranny of man over man. It is the basic, radical, metaphysical challenge to Stalinism and Marxism. It does not accept but denies the interpretation of society in terms of Hegelian thesis and antithesis, Marxist polar opposites of the dialectic, social groups not divided by a human blindness about their human interests as good citizens and good human beings, but essentially antipathetic by their predetermined historical natures, as framed in a cast iron metaphysic. Marxism basically affirms the class war. Gandhism basically denies it. Chauvinism or Black Fascism in effect affirms the inevitability of state wars. Gandhism denies it. Gandhism basically denies both propositions, as does Catholic Christianity. Chauvinism and Marxism and Red Fascism in effect assert both. The difference is the most radical conceivable in the world to-day as between two "revolutionary" doctrines. At the moment, Gandhism is reaching its stated immediate objectives and Stalinism is building up for itself, as did "successful" Hitlerism, a ring of opposition which will achieve its violent downfall.

The word *ahimsa* is to be found in the *Upanishads*. But the gospel of *ahimsa* is peculiarly M. K. Gandhi's. And if we look for its origins, I suspect that more are to be found in the writings of Tolstoy than in Hindu orthodoxy. The Mahatma indeed has followed the customary Indian occupation of

writing a commentary on the *Gita*. Now the epic theme of the *Gita* is about the making of war and the scruples of the inquiring hero, Arjuna, about whether he should make war on his rebellious kin. This the Mahatma interprets as a moral allegory, concerning the making of war on the evil passions within ourselves. It must be admitted that orthodox Hinduism and most scholars do not agree with this allegorical interpretation, and that this is not the plain meaning. Indeed the *Gita* was recited by pious Indian nationalists (inspired by Tilak, in his *Commentary on the Gita*) as an incitement to rise and strike the British. The *Gita* ends with the words of Krishna the Divine, the Incarnation of Vishnu:

“Slain, thou wilt obtain heaven; victorious thou wilt  
enjoy the earth;  
Therefore stand up, O son of Kunti, resolute to  
fight.  
Taking as equal pleasure and pain, gain and loss,  
victory and defeat.”

“Hato va prapsyasi svargam jitva va bhoksyase mahim  
Tasmad uttistha Kaunteya yuddhaya krtaniscayah.

Sukhaduhkhe same krtva labhalabhau jayajayau  
Tato yuddhaya yujyasva naivam papam avapsyasi.”

This is the final command of the god, all doubts being expelled. I myself remember that it was precisely the *Gita* which, in the First World War, *prevented* me from accepting a Tolstoyan pacifism. To the orthodox Hindu, far from the *Gita* authorizing the Mahatma's doctrine, that doctrine of Respect for Life is more than suspect of Jain or of Christian influences. It is nearer to the philosophy of Albert Schweitzer, the missionary of Lambaréné, than of the Lord Krishna.

Let us then turn from Vishnu to Christ. Is it not as we have said, that the Mahatma is a great channel of Christian thought to India, even more than of Indian thought to us? Is he not justified by the authority of the Crucified, of the Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes? “He who beareth no ill-will to any being, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving . . . he

is dear to Me"—so says the ambiguous *Gita*. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." These are the words which, we know from his own lips, did so much to shape the gospel of the Mahatma. But they, too, must be taken in the context of the indignation of Christ and of the justice of God. They must be taken in the context of the whole of the Gospels and also of the Epistles where Peter says that the ruler bears not the sword in vain but for a punishment to evil-doers.

The Mahatma, himself, unlike the Western pacifists, has never declared all force or all wars always wrong. He has, himself, taken part in these without giving himself the benefit of claiming that a non-combatant is in some special moral category. As I read his *Hind Swaraj* I reflected that here were uncertain and unexplored areas in his teaching, areas of critical importance for those who might be prepared to accept in full faith his gospel but balked at the notion that triumphant evil would meet no check or bridle from justice. "Justice is Mine. I will repay." But through whom? "Judge not and ye shall not be judged." But woe unto the hypocrites, evil-speakers, liars, slanderers. "Resist not evil." But cast out the money-changers from the temple and refuse to obey alike Pilate and Caiaphas. Was there a right form of judgement and a wrong? A right way of executing justice and a wrong? A right resistance to evil by *satyagraha* and a wrong, by *himsa*, by violence? Was force itself sometimes the lesser evil, force met by force?

I knew that the Mahatma would outstrip Hinduism in judging evil and in resisting evil. It was not the case with him that "all would be the same in a thousand years". He would insist on present courage. I knew that, at one here with Christian dogma which thus condemns secular men, he would yet insist that the evil-doer must not be regarded as beyond redemption.

But who should execute justice; check and punish injustice; arrest the obstinate evil-doer so that he should have to reflect upon repentance? Admit that angry violence leads to more angry violence, who yet could arrest violence with angerless impartiality? Who rose above hate and lust for power? Who

would do the duty to which Krishna exhorted Arjuna in the *Gita*? Slavery could be crushed by war; but who would put under the last enemy, in war itself, except war, so that, at last, that which has put under all should itself be put under? This was still obscure. It was yet the heart of the question. And I was determined to have the answer.



## CHAPTER LIV

I ARRIVED in Delhi on the Friday, as I have said, of a historic week. On the same day, Admiral Lord Mountbatten of Burma, the war-time head of South-East Asia Command, cousin of the King of England and Emperor of India, and himself the new Viceroy of India, arrived in Delhi airport. The next Monday I was summoned to the Investiture of the last of the Viceroys of India. A few days later yet, I went to the reception given by the new Viceroy to the delegates to the Asiatic Relations Conference.

This March, Delhi was at its Indian loveliest. The big red kanna flowers were not yet wilted. The flaming splendour of the gold mohur tree was at its most magnificent. Hot, but not yet so hot as to deprive one of all vigour, the Indian sun put every detail of roof and wall into sharp relief. In the streets the white dhotis of men and the brilliant saris of the women reminded one that one was in the imperial city of the Grand Moghuls and in a country so little changed, despite the vast red constructions of Sir Edwin Lutyens with their suggestions of an Indian Rome, since the days when Akbar was in his golden prime.

The Viceroy came in to the Durbar Hall, for the Investiture, at the slow march, the announcing bugles having been blown to herald his arrival while the audience rose. It was the first time I had seen Lord Mountbatten. Having taken the oath, he delivered a brief address from the viceregal throne. This was not, he said, a normal viceregency. The British Government was resolved to transfer power by June, 1948. He came there to be of service to the people of India. This clause, this stress that the primary duty was to India, he later told me he had, himself, inserted in the prepared speech. It keyed his policy.

The ancient pomp of the Durbar Hall was in evidence, although a touch of burlesque was given by electricians fitting the lights on the throne after most of the audience had

assembled. The magnificent household guards stood on the outer circle at attention, holding stiffly their lances with the household colours, red and white, which oddly enough were those of Poland—and of Indonesia. The dark building, shaped like some vast Turkish bath, was now well lit. And the Viceroy and Vicereine were superbly suited for the drama of their part. It was a scene of white court dress, of white naval uniforms, of deep red velvet and purple. Hollywood itself could have made no improvement.

I had reached the Durbar Hall, up the vast flight of steps of Viceroy's House, from the great driveway which runs from the New Delhi triumphal arch past Sir Edwin Lutyen's great constructions of the Secretariat on left-hand and on right. On one side, in the hall of the Secretariat, I had read the inscription quoting from the words of Queen Victoria in her proclamation of the 1st November, 1858: "In their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our security; and in their gratitude our best reward." And the still bolder phrase: "Liberty will not descend upon a people. People must raise themselves to Liberty. It is a blessing that must be earned before it can be enjoyed." It was an interesting comment on the British *Raj* in India that the British had written this here. The fulfilment of these things I saw before me. Liberty had been earned and, as independence, was about to be enjoyed.

Not everybody appreciated what was going on. Half the Durbar Hall was full of British officers and their wives. It all seemed to them very sad and the fault of the British Government. The Indians were always so polite—always. The British were now having to leave. But the Indians, they all wanted them to stay. "Isn't that so, Jack?" Jack was non-committal. He thought much his wife said was right. On the other hand, Indians, nervous about their future, were conspicuous by their absence. I could only count three Maharajas present, including the romantic loyalist, the Maharaja of Dholpur, and his son-in-law, Nabwa. Others, men known to the Viceroy from boyhood, had deserted what seemed to them the sinking ship of the British *Raj* and were conspicuous being ushered around the Asiatic Relations Conference hall, with their military attachés skirmishing ahead of them, looking for

a seat both free and prominent. In the cloak-room, as I came in, I noted many military caps and one solitary white Ascot top hat, a memory of past pomps.

However, on either side of the Viceroy and his lady, sat the masters, Nehru, Patel, Liaquat Ali Khan. I could not but wonder whether that support did not represent more real power for the future Commonwealth than all the owners of white Ascot top hats. For myself, so recently arrived this second time in India, I was confident that it did. But this was the query that I put to myself, the question to which I was determined to get an answer from those better informed.

Three days after the Inauguration, I went to the other ceremony, more protracted and better attended.

Here again was to be seen all the pomp and ceremony of power. Here was a veritable magic palace, the great Viceregal House illuminated, the gardens posted with, again, the statue-like Indian guards. Within, tables groaned under a selection of delicacies and drinks—mostly soft drinks, however, to suit the Moslem and Hindu taste. A temporary diversion was caused by the immense interest of the Tibetan delegation in these delicacies and the tendency of these pilgrims from the roof of the world, for their better advantage, to get at the back of the tables along with the waiters. This was to the obvious embarrassment of these latter, who were at a loss to know what protocol might be when a diplomat in cloth of gold raided the chicken sandwiches from the rear.

The reception over, at which the Vicereine was good enough to pay me a very pretty compliment which showed her superb social skill, I joined the other guests in the gardens worthy of some story from the *Thousand and One Nights*, with their playing jet-fountains, as the Indian sun sunk in a dun-coloured haze of dust and the quick dusk gathered and turned into night over Delhi. Here were Burmans in their brilliant costumes of salmon-colour and blue, the Bhutanese in Chinese court-dress and the Chinese in Western dress, the Tibetans with their crowns of cloth of gold, Egyptians, Persians, Medes, Parthians, Elamites, delegates from the Soviet Unions of the East, representatives from the islands across the sea, Ceylon and Indonesia, peoples of all Asia.

Above the palace, startling against the darkening sky,

flew the British flag, the conjoined crosses of George, Andrew and Patrick. The reception ended, the ceremonial band began to play the national anthem as the Mountbattens stood by one of the artificial pools in the great garden, amid their polylingual guests. I wondered, and was conscious how many others were wondering, how many more times this national anthem would be played and when the Union flag would, after two centuries, be lowered for the last time, floating from its flagstaff over imperial Delhi.

And when the Indian flag was raised, green, white, orange, with Gandhi's spinning wheel thereon transformed into the Wheel of Life of the Lord Buddha, how long would it still remain true that, as an American general said, at the strains of "God Save the King", one quarter of the world rises to its feet. He could have added that another tenth does so at the identical strains of "America". I hoped that it might be for long, until some new and better anthem of humanity took its place.

It was a few minutes before 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 28th February, 1948, that the last British soldiers, men of the First Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry, accompanied by Major Fritts, of the Dorsets, first regiment in India, left Indian soil, after two hundred years, by the port of Bombay. Sergeant Major Bartlett, a Somerset man, was actually the last to embark. The British and Indian troops mutually presented arms. "God Save the King"—still King of India—was played, and *Vande Mataram*. Colonel Platt, responding to the remarks of the Indian G.O.C., Bombay area, gave the cry *Jai Hind*, "Long Live India". In a new form the *Raj* lived on—the Indian *Raj* now, as part of the Commonwealth, and the Kaiser-i-Hind as King of India. A great chapter was gloriously closed, and a new era begun.

## CHAPTER LV

ON my return to Northern India a month later, I was invited by Lord Mountbatten to stay at the Viceroy's residence at Delhi. There is a gratification in staying in great houses and a gratification in being saluted by sentry after sentry as one makes one's entrance. It is a naïve pleasure in ritual admixed with contempt of oneself for the enjoyment. It is right as an attribute of office and evil as a gratification of power. And here was power, traditional power. The enjoyment even of the appearance of power is one of the subtlest poisons which influence the human breast. It is the glory of Caesar and the very essence and distillation of poison, which corrupts man absolutely. Or it can be this. It can also be the panoply of justice and the pomp of law, of which the human instruments are disinterested servants.

The Mahatma is here right. The gratification of power is insidious. And it is evil because it leads one to look with contempt upon disinterested men doing their good, daily work. It makes one discontented to follow their example and to live, not so much without riches, as without glamour and without ambition of power. Is then the world to be without glamour or the colour of imagination? I do not think we reach that conclusion. What matters is the real conviction that to transcend this appeal, by attachment to disinterestedness, is more worth while than to pursue after this call. What it means is, not to abandon stage plays, but to esteem them at their right worth: wisdom is the right perspective of values. At the present time the new Indian Governor of Western Bengal is living modestly in a few rooms in the Governor's House, and using the rest for public entertainment and purposes of state. What matters is the real conviction that saint, scholar, scientist, monk and *sannyasi* do indeed matter more than the film stars of the political world; and that the philosopher not of the study only, but of life does really and indeed matter more than the politician, just so far as the latter understands the means more

than the end. What matters is—I will not say human equality, since human beings are not equal—but human fraternity on the basis of a creative recognition of worth—worth seen with the charitable and shrewd eye of insight, which can see the perfectible in the imperfect.

There was no reason why the sentries should not crash their arms, butts on ground, as they returned smartly from the salute to the Mahatma as he entered. What mattered was that it was also the Mahatma, the spiritual power, that they should salute.

In the Viceroy's House I was allocated the Ava suite, named after a former Viceroy, Lord Dufferin and Ava, but by a strange coincidence earlier occupied by a statesman who had these letters "AVA" as his initials, the Minister of Defence, Mr. A. V. Alexander. I was in the fortunate position of having come on an errand of some importance.

I had returned from Peking to Calcutta and had, as before, been housed by Sjt. Sarat Chandra Bose. What I did not then know was that the Moslem Premier of Bengal, Mr. Surahwardhy, and the leader of the Congress Opposition, Mr. Roy, had been closeted in Sjt. Bose's house that very week-end, endeavouring to arrive at an agreed constitution for a United Bengal, jointly ruled by Hindus and Moslems, and with a large measure of provincial autonomy. It could have been an example of Hindu-Moslem unity if the respective "High Commands" had agreed.

Four years before I had been responsible, in London, for drafting a document which many Indians, British Members of Parliament, and at least one Minister of the British Crown were to sign. It was some evidence that pledges given in the Atlantic Charter were taken seriously by us, not least in the East. The document was well-known enough in India and perhaps earned me some confidence among nationalists.<sup>1</sup> It ran:

"The full and free collaboration of India in the war against Fascism and Imperialism, which India detests, will only be obtained on the day when India is at liberty to determine her own destinies unfettered by foreign rule, as

<sup>1</sup> There is a copy in the University Library, Calcutta.

a free member of a united community of liberty-loving nations.

"The Indian National Congress, being by far the largest popular organized party, has taken the lead in demanding this independence for India; and to this demand, raised throughout the whole country, the Congress owes its historic position. Its members are drawn from every race, speech and religion in India.

"To all minorities in India, it (the Indian National Congress) will guarantee their natural rights, including freedom of worship, speech, civil liberty and political expression. Differences between Indians must be settled by the ordinary democratic processes and, if need be, by plebiscites among Indians. In turn, the Indian National Congress demands that the natural rights of India herself shall be recognized by Britain and shall be guaranteed by the United Nations.

"Therefore this Council of those who support the claims of Congress, ask to-day that the British Parliament shall set a term to India's domination, and shall formally acknowledge the Independence of India to be effective from a stated and immediate date.

"They demand this in the name of effective resistance to Fascism and Imperialism; in the name of Britain's own professions and history of liberty and detestation of any master race; and for the security of Asia against Japanese and all other aggression.

"To maintain this domination in the name of some supposed advantage to the dominated, using the plea of every conqueror and privileged ruler, is hypocritical in morals and anti-democratic in politics. To maintain it for Britain's own financial or diplomatic gain, or to treat the rights of humanity as the mere gaudy decorations of a Crown, is a naked and detestable Imperialism, such as provoked the secession of American Colonies. It may be that we can remain one great and free community together; but this will not be achieved by the British Crown and Ministers repeating ancient follies.

"Further, this Council, appealing to the brotherhood of the United Nations and to the conscience of humanity, ask

the Congress of the United States, the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., the Legislative Houses of China and the Legislatures of the United Nations to guarantee along with Britain, Indian independence and integrity and the fulfilment of that pledge which shall set a date to the completion of this release. India will then achieve that measure of sovereignty and of international responsibility which befits any member of the United Peoples whether small or ancient and great.

“Making this declaration of principles, this Council prays that urgent action shall now be taken by legislators, recognising the instancy of the needs of war, to implement these rights and to provide these guarantees by moving the required solemn declarations in the Legislatures of the Free World.”

It was, I believe, as a consequence of this document that Sjt. S. C. Bose, on the Sunday night, took me into his study and said, “You ask me what has been happening. I will tell you. Surahwardhy and Roy have been here in discussion. This document, agreed by Hindus and Moslems, with provision for the future of Bengal, is the issue. You have been invited to Delhi by the Viceroy. Take it up to the Viceroy and explain it to him.” At this time also I took the opportunity to urge a strong Supreme Court for India, with revisionary power in protection of the Constitution and of fundamental human rights, the proper guarantee of any minority.

Invitations apart, the document gave me a reason for being in Delhi. So did a telegram which I had just received from the Mahatma.



## CHAPTER LVI

WITHIN six days of his arrival in India I had been closeted for two hours with the Viceroy. My impression then was only confirmed by my experience when I stayed with him. Here was a man with something of the gifts of Franklin Delano Roosevelt—the same charm, the same ready accessibility to ideas, the same vitality, the same power suddenly to pull, without bungling or hesitation, the levers of decision. There was neither affectation, pomposity nor the embarrassed stiffness which had characterized his predecessor and yet, in his entries and exits, just enough of the film star manner not only to be royal but, which is not always true of crowned heads, to seem royal. There was a genuine benevolence, concern and sense of urgency and public service. It was part of the picture that he was the King's cousin and part of the picture that he was as handsome as Hollywood could have desired any Viceroy to be. What was his own was the buoyant energy with which he threw himself into affairs and his willingness to hand out generous praise where another man would have forgotten to do so. It does not surprise me that he has become one of the most popular men in India, who leaves an impress all his own, an impress deeper than any of his predecessors, even Warren Hastings, Dalhousie and Curzon.

In March, I had found him telling me that I was the only person who had preached to him optimism. To all the rest he had had to preach optimism. A month later he was the more optimistic of the two. Two new Dominions were shaping under his hand, and this by the wish and request of the populations and political leaders affected. Well he might be pleased, for it was one of the most brilliant exercises of liberal British statesmanship that had been seen for long that was reaching fruition. We were returning to the great and imaginative days, as in the times of Canning, of British statesmanship. We were backing Asiatic nationalism, and bringing in Southern Asia to redress the balance of the world.

On the first night, I dined with the new British High Commissioner in India, Sir Terence Shone, and his charming wife. I had come through by plane from Nanking and Shanghai via Calcutta and had political information to talk over. Two nights later we dined together again in the Viceregal palace, Mr. Jinnah—the Quaid-e-Azam—and his sister, and the Maharaja of Patiala, being among the guests. Since His Highness of Patiala was perhaps the greatest man in the Sikh community, and Moslems and Sikhs, murdering each other in inter-communal riots, were reducing the Punjab to anarchy, it was no small triumph of diplomacy to get these potentates together in the same room. The responsibility for this success was purely Lord Mountbatten's. There was obviously no question here of a royal personage being moved around by his staff and advisers.

The dinner in the long room of Viceroy's House was a brilliant affair, with a formal and modest selection of wines, from which Mr. Jinnah did not abstain. The Viceroy, happy in a wife who had the highest gifts as a hostess, made the conversation move with a swing. Even Mr. Jinnah, long, thin, immaculately dressed in the black silk soutane of an Indian gentleman of distinction, relaxed. The liveried servants reminded one that one sat in the imperial palace of India, in the capital of the Moghuls. Not until after dinner did one have evidence that conversations were in progress upon which certainly the fate of a fifth of the human race, if not of the rest, depended. For it is still true that this fate depends upon decisions taken, not by the millions, but upon a few leaders who understand the art of swaying, as Mr. Jinnah certainly could sway, these millions.

After dinner the party adjourned to a room where I found myself again next to Miss Jinnah, who is an admirable conversationalist. For half an hour the "Quaid-e-Azam" (Supreme Leader), Mr. Jinnah, and the Maharaja of Patiala sat on a couch in conversation together, to the undisguised pleasure of the Mountbattens.

The previous day I had not felt well enough to undertake a car-run to Agra, which had been arranged for me, by the Viceroy's courtesy, in order to view the Taj Mahal. I must confess this fault of omission. However, I have also to confess

that sight-seeing never had the same interest for me as the viewing and assessment of a human problem or the elegance of an exploration of ideas.

After many years of fairly close observation of Western politics I had formed certain opinions which had become firmly enough settled. I had come to respect the moral judgements of "the common reader" in affairs, and the humanities which the long experience of mankind has agreed to applaud. I was intensely distrustful of all reasons of state whatsoever and governmental expediencies which found reasons for subordinating these moral judgements and simpler human intuitions to so-called "higher considerations", which I regarded as usually bogus, but closely connected with the ambitions of politicians. The "good man" in politics seemed to me a figure far too important for the common good for any man of political experience to care two raps whether, by praising the "good man", he invited the laughter of the supercilious and of those with the inferiority feeling of the unsatisfied power addict.

Mr. Gandhi, it was clear to me, was by every usual test, in the above sense, a "good man", that is a disinterested man, not a vain man, not a personally ambitious man. What I was unable to assess equally well was the character of Mr. Jinnah, with his attendants in green liveries; his young men who had, at Simla, marched up the Viceregal Hill, shouting, "We will achieve Pakistan by sword and blood"; his crowds of followers who demanded that he, the leader, who had once himself regarded Pakistan as only a beautiful dream, should go ever faster to the goal. All this was a great test of a man's integrity. And upon this integrity, this *satyagraha*, this genuine and unaffected concern not only for his own people as a *patrie*, but for his own people as human beings and for humanity, must depend the future fate of Pakistan in relation to India and the history of southern Asia. It was not enough to declaim *Pakistan zindarbad*—"Pakistan for ever". It was, I was sure—and so I had told my Hindu friends—pointless to anticipate history or to be in a hurry with it. The real answer for Pakistan was that of the Rabbi Gamaliel: If this thing was of the Lord, corresponded with real human needs and not the mere ambitions of politicians, then it would live. Otherwise it would

go with the wind. There was here no matter for a quarrel about the word "sovereignty".

My final memories of this five-day stay are of a talk with Lady Mountbatten, when she made me sit on a similar couch to that which the Quaid-e-Azam and Patiala had occupied, and give her my impressions of how I found India; and of my final talk with the Viceroy. Among other things discussed was the future of the Dominion which I suggested, in writing, should be "the Union of India". I do not doubt that others made the same suggestion. I found the Viceroy still buoyant, still decisive, explaining to me his present difficulties and the future hopes of this remarkable and magnetic man, the Franklin Roosevelt of the Indian situation.

## CHAPTER LVII

IN NEW DELHI the Pan-Asiatic Conference drew to the end of its appointed two weeks' session. Its success had been such as to promise that this conference would be the first of many. Nehru's dream so far had come true.

I had had the opportunity for talks of great interest to me with the delegates of Burma and Siam, the Minister of Health of Ceylon, the Vice-Premier of Indonesia. I shared accommodation with the representatives of the sovereign and independent People's Republic of Mongolia, who had, for some strange reason in the logic of sovereign independence, gone to Moscow (speaking a little Russian) to acquire there really competent interpreters, who, however, spoke English but no Mongolian. *En route* it appeared that they had seen the marvels of Soviet civilization in the beauties of Russian-controlled Dresden.

The Tibetan delegation was especially of interest to the traveller. These tall men sat immobile like figures of Mohawk Indians carved from teak or satin-wood. I was, therefore, startled and slightly shocked when one, late at night, remarked to a secretary with some papers: "O.K. Put it down. See you in the morning." But my surprise was allayed when, congratulating another on his command of English, I was told that this was not remarkable since he had been educated at Rugby School. I was chiefly pleased, however, to be told that I should be welcome did I choose to visit Lhasa, a journey, I was informed, which only required thirteen days on pony back from Kalimpong. I mentally decided that I must do this.

After a week of these interchanges I had left for Aligarh to address the great Moslem university there which had received me with the utmost courtesy and cordiality. From there I had proceeded to Allahabad, "the Abode of Allah", at the junction of Jumna and Ganges. It was in Allahabad that I received a telegram from the Mahatma:

"Going Delhi Sunday morning. There four days and return here. Catch me any point.

"GANDHI."

M. K. Gandhi was coming from Patna to Delhi. I decided to take a plane and return to New Delhi. The courtesy of an Indian passenger less pressed than myself—I noted his name, Mr. Ahuja: Allah or Krishna grant him reward—enabled me to secure such priority that I reached Delhi in time.

The conference meeting ground in the Old Fort, Delhi, I knew well. Here I had heard the conference president, Mrs. Saironji Naidu, deliver her inaugural address. It was one of the most stupendous feats of rhetoric I had ever heard in my life. This poetess of India spoke for a full half-hour without a note. Never did she falter. The stream of flawless English flowed on.

The Old Fort, she said, in its earliest shapes had seen the very dawn of history. Here had dwelled Humayun, the Emperor, the dreamer of the stars. Now history again was being made there. A proclamation by Asia was being made to the world, as indestructible pledge of unity against misery, exploitation and ignorance. They sought peace. Not the peace of surrender, negation or cowardice; but a peace dynamic and creative of the works of the human spirit. Had indeed the human spirit ever died? Was there any man so dead that he did not quicken with the spring? So India had said. "I will make a festival." To it all Asia had been summoned.

Who wanted a monochrome of a culture? Variety in unity, unity of heart and diversity of culture—there was the aim. In Persia there was the passionate song of the bulbul; the coolness of the waters was remembered under the palm trees of Mesopotamia; the Arab brought his desert-bred feeling for equality. Mountains could not divide the heart of Asia. "What part of the world equals the splendour of our ideas? We dream in Asia a common dream, that of a comity of friendship. We declare that there shall be no death but a spirit of undefeatable hope. Nothing can die that deserves to live. Let us be soldiers of peace and missionaries of love, for by compassion and by love, not by hate, will the world be redeemed. We shall strive higher until we attain the stars and

pluck the moon from the skies." So, in this stupendous oration, the freedom of India, the unity of Asia were inaugurated.

And now I found myself in the Old Fort again. Again I saw the colourful assemblage of all Eastern nations. Tibetans and Bhutanese in stiff brocade, fezzed Egyptians, Soviet citizens in proletarian caps, Chinese in Western dress, Burmese and Philipinos in salmon-pink silk, and lace bodices for the women. Representatives of various delegations were delivering speeches, but all knew that the great event had still to come. Jawaharlal Nehru, nervously efficient, left the platform to go to the entrance of the vast marquee. Suddenly there was applause, a babble of voices and demands that there should be silence and not applause. The little man who had shaped the destinies of India appeared and was escorted up the gangway. Unchanged from when I had seen him sixteen years before, less tired in appearance than when I had seen him last year, in white like a prophet girt about the loins and with his white cloak of khadi cloth over his shoulder, small, wiry, all the audience had its attention centred on him.

He spoke in his thin, old man's voice, to an audience quite removed from hysterical hero worship, such as surrounded the Quaid-e-Azam. He told them things that they may not have wished to hear. The Soviet delegates had to hear him explain that all the religions of the world—he might have added, "their own included"—had come from Asia, and that Asia would conquer the world again by love and religion. He warned his audience against regarding Delhi as India. India was the India of the village and only those who could reach the village, and the present misery of the village, its dust and dung heaps, could understand and enter into the real civilization of India. He spoke like some new Tolstoy. Many years before, in his *Autobiography*, he had put on record that of the major three influences in his life, two were Ruskin and Tolstoy. By how much had he now transcended them.

I had seen Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin in their prime. Here, however, was no demagogue, but a man striving toughly, obstinately, for the soul of India and of the world. He strove, as the Jewish prophets had striven, ready to rebuke his people for sin.

I left the auditorium as Mrs. Naidu began to speak again. It was out of the question to meet the Mahatma in that gathering. The Delhi telephones worked imperfectly; the Secretary General of the Conference had the wrong number for Mr. Gandhi's *ashram* in the town; it was impossible to make contact. There was nothing for it except to wait the night and, early the following morning, to take a taxi and to go down myself to discover when the uncrowned ruler of India was free to see me if he were so inclined. Even so, on that journey into the sweepers' quarters, the untouchable quarters (neatly white-washed enough) of Delhi, my driver lost his way. At last, after various turns in narrow lanes, we found our destination, on beyond the red-light area, "out of bounds" to troops, in a group of one-story, white buildings.



## CHAPTER LVIII

A YEAR earlier, in 1946, on the heights of Simla, on the terrace of a villa overlooking the high Himalayas, I had seen the Mahatma and Sardar Patel. I had attended Gandhi's prayer meeting, there and in Delhi. I had paced the terrace with him white robed, and with the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur and Agatha Harrison, as I put my questions to him, the father of India, *pater patriae*.

What were his views on the matters that were concerning men most? Could there be an effective United Nations Organization? And did this involve a world police force? It was not for me at that moment to trouble him about Indian constitutional issues which I had already discussed with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with S. C. Bose and, passingly, with Jawaharlal Nehru. I could only, without intrusion, ask him about subjects that were of interest to all humanity upon which some of his views were well-known, but not the entire clarification.

The answer came, deliberate and without stumbling. "We must always hold fast by principles. The right principle is that of non-violence. Who are we to be judges what is aggression and what is not?" The thought went through my mind: Was Germany an aggressor when Britain and France declared war on her? Surely "yes" when she had declared war on Poland. Or was this provoked war? Are the Soviets aggressors or are they not? What is the framework in terms of which we define this term "aggression"? Is it not "refusal to accept arbitration"?

I continued: "If, however, we could have an impartial tribunal, what then? The aggressor is he who will not submit to arbitration . . ."

"By the time," came the reply, "that men have been educated to be impartial in the use of force, they can be educated in non-violence."

I wondered whether this was true. For *most* men, certainly, yes. But did this amount to saying that by the time you can

educate mankind into establishing a tribunal on which a few men will be impartial, you will have been able to educate *all* men, even the criminals and aggressors, into non-violence. And was that true?

Then, by one of those unexpected turns of phrase which infuriate the Western politicians who have had to deal with the Mahatma, he added: "If, of course, we *could* get a really impartial body, then we would all welcome a world police force."

Essentially M. K. Gandhi is a theologian with the mind of a theologian. The modern politician is unaccustomed to dealing with theologians. Their mixture of ideal principles and practical adjustments he distrusts and suspects in other politicians, as being crafty and hypocritical. As much as any Father of the Church or mediaeval bishop, the Mahatma is pre-occupied with the principles of the spiritual life; with the limited few, who are prepared to follow the counsels of perfection; and with the preaching of new education in the spiritual life. But periodically, like St. Augustine, he recognizes the need for the secular arm, and is prepared to recognize its difficulties and its function, a subordinate function required "by reason of sin". And, as I have shown earlier, he prides himself upon his willingness to be plastic, to compromise, in detail, once the principle is accepted or is not involved.

In his *Autobiography* he has stated his position on these compromises. "All my life through, the very insistence on truth has taught me the beauty of compromise. . . . I convinced them of the applicability of the principle of looking at a thing from different standpoints in different circumstances." "All I can say is that God gives me guidance to react to situations as they arise." The Mahatma has a vast capacity for practical compromises, and yet a persistent tendency to hark back from them to first principles. "Truth is hard as adamant but tender as a blossom."

In Delhi, there in the sweeper's quarters, I found him in one of his less compromising moods, although more cheerful than a year before. I had arrived unannounced, but I explained my position to Miss Slade, "Mirabai", the niece of the Director of the London School of Economics: that I had been summoned by telegram but had been unable to get into touch when

I arrived by plane. The Mahatma, it seemed, had a morning fully occupied with delegations. "The Tibetan delegation to the Conference is soon due to arrive and to make certain presentations to him. And then Sir S. Radhakrishnan is coming to see him . . . However, Gandhiji would certainly wish to see you." At the moment he was resting. Then he would have his massage, his shave, and his bath. She, Mirabai, would see what she could do. At the moment she was distressed because the mechanical hairdresser's clippers for shaving and for clipping the Mahatma's hair were out of order.

I occupied my time in looking around the *ashram* or settlement, and talking to members. It was a very simple collection of white-washed buildings, some without a front wall and only a cane or palm-leaf thatch as protection against the sun. Beyond the second of these improvised cells was a small Hindu shrine of Valmiki, the converted thief who sought repentance. Valmiki is a kind of deified Robin Hood. On earth he had been a famous robber who, one day, had robbed a *rishi*, a holy man. The *rishi* asked the thief who he thought would bear the responsibility for all the evil he had done on earth. Confidently Valmiki said that his family, who had profited by the proceeds of his robberies, would share the responsibility. But they, when asked, had other views—how the bread-winner got his money was no responsibility of theirs. The mortified Valmiki turned to the *rishi*, who taught him, in sign of repentance, to call on Rama and to repeat, as with a rosary, his name. Revisiting the place in a later year, the *rishi* found Valmiki stationary and over-run by ants, who had built an ant-heap round him . . . But still he was repeating the words "Ram, Ram". So he was declared a *rishi* himself and a *saddhu*; and was indeed a poet, the author of the Rama epic. In this figure of the Penitent Thief, the outcaste sweepers who inhabited this section of Delhi had found their appropriate patron saint.

While I digested the meaning of this and talked with one of the disciples of the *ashram*, a message came that I might wait for the Tibetan reception, but that the Mahatma would also like to see me alone. Would I see him while he took his bath? A secretary, I observed, took a note of our conversation for future reference

## CHAPTER LIX

THE MAHATMA, when I saw him, was lying in his bath. His welcoming word was, "See what confidence I have in you!"—not that he was a Marat or I a Corday. We then agreed how long we had for conversation before he must dress, and he assured me, with the familiar humour, that it was he who would have the last word.

This time, part of the conversation was concerned with immediate practical affairs, the Christian community in India and the trouble that was being stirred up for the new India in Goa. He asked me, if I were in a position to be of aid here, to take certain action which later I took. We talked about Wendell Willkie's "One World", and about his own reference to this ideal. I suggested a letter from him of encouragement to the Willkie Foundation—which he later wrote.

Then I recalled our conversation in Simla. I told Mr. Gandhi that I fully recognized that the only long-range cure for war was the re-education in charity of the spirit of man. But—assuming, as hypothesis, both aggression and the choice of an arbitrator by the majority—would he, I asked, approve of the use of restraint upon this aggressor?

This time my reply was less clear and indeed was rather of the character of a warning. There could be, the Mahatma said, no "one world" unless it were founded upon union in respect for truth. At present there was too much humbug and hypocrisy about international relations, each claiming that he only was righteous. Always there had been the facts of murder and sudden death in the world. But their existence constituted no justification. One must not compromise or come to terms with them. The prospect of world unity rested upon respect for truth and *ahimsa*. Non-violence was a right course in case of doubt, for non-violence had never done any harm to anybody.

I knew the emotional background of this reply. It had been expressed in Gandhi's comment to Nehru during the war.

"We must look the world in the face with calm and clear eyes even though the eyes of the world are bloodshot to-day." (8 August, 1942.)<sup>1</sup> The Mahatma saw no sufficient reason for one world war, let alone for two. It was the philosopher Kant who coldly reminded the world that there never had been or could be "a just war", where there was no agreed judge to adjudicate upon what was just. "No man can be judge in his own cause." And yet—there is a natural sense of justice prior to and apart from courts . . . And a human impulse to see it realized. Was the Mahatma's objection to an organization to enforce peace final, and was this statement that non-violence never did any harm in fact accurate? If a man is assaulted by a gunman, and I stand by doing nothing but protest or invite the blows upon myself—I, who might along with the victim, by prompt action, have driven the gunman away—is it true that my non-violence has "never done any harm to anybody"? Is there a necessary violence (or, if this word of dispraisal begs the question, then "force") required by justice and offered by courage? Let us admit, of course, that *satyagraha* is the opposite of cowardice and evasion; and that most violence is *not* required by justice. Here is a major enigma of Gandhism.

I left the Mahatma to complete his toilet and returned a little later to find him robed and seated cross-legged on a mattress, with a mug of milk or gruel before him. The Tibetan delegation was expected. I presented to him the white rosary which Pope Pius had given to me, and he was obviously pleased. This was a tribute to goodness as such and a rope to the throne of God. It was also a protest, by this gift blessed by the Vicar of Christ and by this giving of which the Vatican knew, against the arrogance of those who say that Christ is Himself infinite mercy and infinite power, cannot save whom He will, as Abraham and Enoch were saved, or cannot, as He chooses, raise up saints and witnesses to Himself, even out of the very stones.

Then the Tibetans arrived, almost filling the small room as they sat on the floor or called in their porters with bales and treasures. There were rolls of silk stuffs; pictures embroidered in silk of the Buddha; small figures, dressed with tinselled silk, showing the national costume; a message on a sealed scroll

<sup>1</sup> J. Nehru: *The Discovery of India*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion is to the theology of Dr. Karl Barth.

from the Dalai Lama, "the Pope of the Saffron Robe", to M. K. Gandhi. It was an unforgettable scene, with the holy man of India sitting in his white garments, humorously apologizing to his visitors for not sharing his gruel and for having no other time to receive them except when he was taking it, and the tall, gaunt figures of the Tibetan officials, with their braided, black hair and elaborate ornaments of crude gold and turquoise. Only the interpreter spoke, in English. The others remained as impassive as was their wont. The features were indistinguishable from the North-American Indian—while so dissimilar from the Hindu. And with reason, for both Tibetan and North-American Indian are Mongolian.

The Mahatma did not let off his guests lightly. Having ascertained that the silk stuffs came from India, he pertinently enquired whether they might not come "perhaps from Mr. Birla's mills". Then he turned his attention to the little tinsel dolls. "Avoid tinsel," he said. "Tell your Dalai Lama, tell your great little Lama—I call him little because he is young enough to be my grandchild and great because of his office—to imitate the Buddha. The Buddha came as a poor and humble man, walking almost naked. He wore no tinsel. Tell your Dalai Lama to avoid tinsel and to imitate the Buddha."

While this conversation with its admonitions was continuing, I took a look at a picture which was one of the gifts—a picture of a small boy of twelve or thirteen staring out and looking as if he wanted to be told a fairy story, a small boy in Chinese ceremonial dress, or perhaps it was Tibetan ceremonial dress, seated on what seemed to be a sumptuously quilted bed. The face was ingenuous, open, intelligent but similar enough to thousands of small boys of his age, whether brought up on the plains of China or amid the menacing fastnesses of Tibet, where rebels led by the former regent were at this time being scourged within an inch of their lives or having their eyes put out as punishment for the revolt. The picture I was looking at was that of the Dalai Lama himself. It increased my interest in visiting this land, although I was already old enough to know that those who cross seas and mountains, do not change their spirit but carry the same self with them. The only intelligent reason for travel is that which Plato gave: to talk with wise men.

When I quitted the small adobe living-room, the seated Mahatma was still talking to the delegation. It was to be the last time that I should see him. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, with his high white turban, was waiting on a bench in the courtyard outside for his audience. I saluted, took my car, and left for Benares and Calcutta.

## CHAPTER LX

I CAME away from talking with Mr. Gandhi with my mind surging with questions. The least of them almost was the rights and wrongs of pacifism. The whole question was involved of a way of life which reconciled charity and justice.

In a recent article on "The Prevention of War", Bertrand Russell wrote: "A complete pacifist might say: "Peace with Russia can always be preserved by yielding to every Russian demand". This is the policy of appeasement, pursued, with disastrous results, by the British and French Governments in the years before the war that is now ended. I, myself, supported this policy on pacifist grounds, but I now hold that I was mistaken. Such a policy encourages continually greater demands upon the part of the Power to be appeased, until at last some demand is made which is felt to be intolerable, and the whole trend is suddenly reversed. It is not by giving the appearance of cowardice or unworthy submission that the peace of the world can be secured."

That puts the issue very well. If the question is put: "Which is right, to follow Gandhi or to resist Hitler?" almost all the Western world will reply in one way. "Hitler had to be resisted. Human dignity involved resisting an unscrupulous tyranny. Gandhi's gospel of individual non-violent resistance, and of hoping that tyranny with time will yield to the forces of reason and opinion, is quite impracticable." But the question stated in Russell's way is far more realistic in terms of our present world.

Should we say that, on the principle of "Non-Intervention" in the domestic matters of other States, we are guiltless, have no share in the guilty acts of alien tyrannies? I recall the sardonic comment of Talleyrand on Non-Intervention: "*Mot métaphysique et politique qui signifie à peu près la même chose qu'intervention.*"<sup>1</sup> Can we so divide between the domestic

<sup>1</sup> "A metaphysical and political word which signifies almost the same thing as intervention."



abettors of wrong and the outside abettors; or say that black or red Fascism and tyranny elsewhere should be no affair of ours? And the preparation for aggression against any others than ourselves?

Certain progressives talk indeed more internationally about the need for an international police force more powerful than that of either the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. But does Mr. Henry Wallace explore whether the U.S.S.R. will agree to such a force, on this side of a revolution which will leave the minority Powers with the controlling voice? Certain pacifists in the West deliberately and wilfully evade the question whether the police preservation of enduring peace may not mean the use of organized force, just as the preservation of civic peace is generally held to involve the use of force—and, in the present stage of world history, of international force on a *large* scale. They recoil from this issue or plead that international justice does not punish the individual criminal, which is no longer true; or that those who abet have no collective guilt; or that to punish the abettor will also mean injury to innocent people; or that the criminal aggressor may have something to be said on his side—as indeed he has; but not enough. He has the age-long argument for world anarchy—camouflaged as resistance to the injustices of Versailles; or the cause of the workers led by the chosen vanguard few; or the advantage to humanity of rule by the eugenically most fit. Always there is *something* to be said. But the Western pacifist will not answer the question: is the force used by a criminal different in moral quality from the force used to enforce due process of law?

Is it our duty to humanity to resist by force the tyranny of Stalin which had already starved its tens of thousands where Hitler, until he began his anti-Jewish campaign, had only slain his thousands? Is this the most practical, perhaps the only practical route, to save freedom for the individual to express his views? Is Karl Jaspers, the German philosopher, right, in his *Schuldfrage*, that Britain, France and America share in the guilt for the rise of Hitler, by refusing to offer unqualified condemnation of Hitler in the early days, even if this meant marching in, and causing injury to some innocent in Germany along with the guilty? How far do we, ourselves, share in the collective guilt of evil-doers when we condone evil;

shake hands with murderers; refrain even from non-violent resistance; and betray our friends, making "from cowardice the great refusal"?

My inclination was to agree with Bertrand Russell. My inclination was to say that the preaching of pacifism is very important; but it is important as the preaching of a new educational method, a deliberate and disciplined education in co-operation. What is needed is an education, not so much of the intellect as of the emotions, and a training in the attitude of good will. But still the aggressor, the thug, the fifth column, the Brown army and the Red army, the Gestapo and the G.P.U., must be met by force. The organized force of the world must be directed by majority decision against an aggressor, and directed with such force that Gestapo and G.P.U. will soon find themselves inside the barbed wire of their own concentration camps or working in their own salt mines or hanging together on the gallows in Nuremberg. But was my inclination to this view right?

After the war against Hitlerite tyranny in Germany, might come the war against Stalinite tyranny, oligarchy and dictatorship in the Soviet Union. And after that, what? Would it not have been better not to fight at all? Better to appease alike Stalin and Hitler, and to leave so many thousands in the West still unmaimed, alive and fed? Was the courage present in mankind to establish a world tribunal, impartial in justice, resting upon the decision of the majority, endowed with adequate force to crush international crime? Was this endeavour to establish a police force—to make the upholding of peace, and the establishment of a world tribunal, and the maintenance of due process of law, as the prior condition of real justice and effective liberty—a right endeavour?

Or was history too uncertain in its judgements to give us—as the Mahatma seemed to suggest—the right to draw such a conclusion? Could we only set personally a different example, of non-violence; and remonstrate by word and example with the aggressor. A million might perish this way but five million would be saved. Was the appetite for power among the power-addicts of the world best met by not opposing them, by not getting in their way in their pursuit of power, but by just leaving them to find their error as one may leave an angry man to cool

his wrath? Was what was needed "a little more good will"—here meaning a willingness to concede points to the other side where the other side had another view? As a friend very high in the Secretariat of the United Nations had said to me: "There is nothing wrong with appeasement at the right time", i.e. a Chamberlainism of the Left.

I concluded that, perhaps, the Mahatma had one thing in mind and I another. But when he had given his blessing to an international police force, "if impartial", had he not shown what his answer would have to be, if he permitted himself to pose the problem to himself as I posed it? That is, granted an impartial judge, does not justice authorize the use of a restraining force. Or, granted a judge as impartial as is historically possible.

The problem for the Mahatma was: What should be the conduct of the righteous man? My problem was the different one: What can we do to protect ordinary folk against unrighteous men? I did not pass black-and-white judgement on the unrighteous. But I did take the stand of saying that I knew what is unrighteousness (at least in some cases), condemned it, and would restrain so far as in me lay the practice of it, where impartial authority so authorized. The real issue was: What moral value did the Mahatma attribute to the human execution of justice, the doing of justice as a duty, apart from the consequences? It was an issue vigorously stated in the *Gita*, where the Lord advises Arjuna to do his duty and fight, whatever the consequences of war.

## CHAPTER LXI

IN THE First World War I was not a conscientious objector. My final judgement was formed after reading the *Bhagavad Gita*, that leading sacred book of Hinduism—with its exhortation, worthy of the German philosopher Kant, to perform the duty of one's post; and with its explanation why that duty should be performed even in war and through war. It had provided for me the answer to Tolstoy. I had written to M. K. Gandhi asking how my difficulty here could be met. I had done this some years ago. But on this occasion I had received no reply. I know, of course, of the great influence Tolstoy and Ruskin had had on the Mahatma; but he was also a student of the *Gita*.

Various attempts have been made to explain away the teaching of the *Gita*. It has been suggested that the real difficulty for the hero Arjuna was not fighting, but fighting his own kinsfolk. His weakness was unwillingness to do his duty when his own relations were involved. This seems to me to make trivial the whole great drama. The dramatic effect lies in the issue whether it is right to make war, and indeed a duty at times to make war even against one's own kin—even when the inhibitions of humanity are re-enforced, as for Antigone in Sophocles' play, by the inhibitions of family feeling. As hard a case is stated as could well be wished for.

The teaching of the Lord Krishna is that the man of duty will grasp eternal things and will know that fighter and fought against, victor and victim, are merely passing phenomena of history.

"Man reacheth perfection by each being intent on his own duty. Listen then how perfection is won by him who is intent on his duty . . .

"Entrenched in egoism, thou thinkest 'I will not fight'; to no purpose thy determination; nature will constrain thee . . .

"The Lord dwelleth in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, by His illusive power (*Maya*) causing all things to revolve, as though mounted on a potter's wheel." (*Eighteenth Discourse*.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, trans. A. Besant. London and Benares, 1904.

Some have said that the *Gita* provides a new and forcible argument against war since, if all is one, and I and thee are also one, as expressions of the One Eternal Self or reality, then, if I hurt thee, I indeed hurt myself. We are not so much all members one of another as all of one unity and substance. And the *Gita* certainly counsels gentleness and good will. But to whom?

Others, and the Mahatma is among these, have seen the *Gita* as a spiritual allegory. The conflict to which Arjuna is urged by the Lord Krishna is a spiritual conflict against the serried ranks of the evil passions. They are his own, within a man's own breast; and it is his duty to fight against them, against this which is part of his very self. The argument here is the very opposite. Because it is part of oneself, an evil part, one must fight against it.

Neither the first interpretation nor this approved by the Mahatma seems to me satisfactory. Nor do I think that many Indians agree with this interpretation. Certainly the monks at Belur did not. The *Gita* may be wrong or it may be sophistical. But it provides a long argument—as much the key argument as the key argument of Plato's *Republic* is about Justice—in favour of fighting war when duty indicates it.

The doubt about the *Gita* which arises in one's mind is that which arises about all Hindu philosophy. What is this duty? It lies in the position and indeed the nature of a particular man, issues from the way he was made and his *Dharma* or fate and his *Karma* or predetermining circumstances. Is it, then, a rational duty, or more than a caste duty, to wage war—or an amoral predetermination, a human habit?

Why do we over-ride the claims of humanity and of kinship? Is it because we should not over-estimate them; because they are not so important; because they also are *Maya*? And is, then, anything important at all, any values; is anything not *Maya*—except the bare affirmation that my “true” I is at one with the Eternal, that “God is I” and—dangerous, easily immoral belief—“I am God”? Is not here the weakness, the fallacy, the failure of guidance, of the *Gita*? Is it not just too “deep” to be true? Was not the Buddha nearer truth who preached the Wheel of Salvation just because he thought it mattered immensely—the effort mattered immensely that men should hear

of the path to salvation, even though it were but the dreary, pessimistic path to Nirvana? Do not peace and charity matter immensely? . . . And justice? . . . What then is my duty?

Our views on the *Gita* cannot be settled by the authority of the *Gita*, or its obscurity clarified by reading it for it to interpret itself. No sure interpretation exists. And, even when rightly interpreted, the message may still be wrong. Superficially, the *Gita* provides the moral metaphysic of the Book of Job and the Mahatma that of the Poor Man of Assisi. Both the *Gita*, which preaches duty in disregard of temporal ties with individuals, but without giving a reason for this duty, and the Mahatma, who preaches no-force, in disregard of temporal obligations to do justice (however doubtful may be the judgement of history on what is justice)—both may be wrong.

When we have settled this principle, then only can we settle the route and method of the *sannyasin*, whether by poverty, chastity, truth and courage, or otherwise, to carry out the principle. And there are many *sannyasin* who do not agree with the Mahatma, as well as some who do. And there will be some who disagree with the *Gita* also, or who can interpret it away.

## CHAPTER LXII

Is it not a heresy to think of material peace as so important? Surely there is a heroic side in man which rejects such an interpretation.

But this is a misrepresentation. It is like pretending that the Mahatma, like some Westerners, seeks to appease tyranny; or is not concerned with a New Way to oppose it. For the Mahatma, peace is certainly not at all the same as material security. The work for it can be a heroic life-work of non-violent non-co-operation, which for him has involved long periods of incarceration. Much of his *Autobiography* was written when imprisoned in the cause of Indian independence. For others this work for peace has involved death.

For the Mahatma peace is the practical work of charity. Nothing at all can be morally more important, as St. Paul says, than charity. War involves in practice a hate inconsistent with charity. Many propagandists, such as Mr. Rex Stout, asserted during this last war that the execution of justice through war was quite ineffective without a burning hate of persons. For example, we must hate not only tyranny but tyrants. We must hate not only the Russian secret police, but Generalissimo Stalin. For the Mahatma this hatred, blotting out charity, leads to nothing constructive. Hating the Nazis or the British does not lead to the peaceful independence of India, or to the easy balance of power, or to the reconstruction of Europe or Germany—or of the Punjab. Hating the Bolsheviks will carry us no further.

Peace indeed is so important, not only as the expression of an inward good will, but also as the prior condition of the realization on earth of the other great values. There can be no substantial liberty for the individual and no economic justice within society so long as war is endemic. This is where the Marxists and Bolsheviks err. The framework then of lasting peace, even if it may accommodate punitive action against aggressors, is the prior condition of substantial liberty and

substantial social justice. No peace will be satisfactory which does not give room for the peaceful development of these things; but no liberty or justice will be possible where the international anarchy is preferred to the imperatives of organized peace and the association to enforce peace. In our priorities in building the world this organization of peace has then the first priority. Nothing which does not firmly offer this—does not, at least ultimately, offer a plausible organization such as decision by majority vote and by judicial interpretation of rights, with due process of law—need be considered morally.

I was in India when its peaceful independence was being achieved, and when Mr. Gandhi was showing himself one of the most successful of realist politicians, although he had put civil peace before national liberty itself. But perhaps he was only so successful because Britain was a democracy and still had a conscience which could be stirred. . . .

We do not know the answer here. *Satyagraha* was perhaps easier in South Africa and India than it could be in Germany or in Russia to-day. But how about its use in industrial and civil disputes where it should be yet easier still? At least, in view of the practical success of the *Swaraj* movement, I do not think that we can say, with G. D. H. Cole that, although Gandhi has achieved *satyagraha* in a personal sense, he has not solved the problem, by finding terms of collaboration between man and man, which could make successful a mass movement against civil and social and national war. For all the backslidings, for all the gap between the disciplined *satyagrahi* and the masses, the masses yet *have* been led in non-violence. It is precisely the conspicuous success of the Mahatma that, although these masses can know little of the philosophy of pacifism and have little intention of taking on the life of discipline which he prescribes for the vanguard, nevertheless he has succeeded in making pacifism or “non-violent strike” work as a disciplined mass technique. Emphatically, M. K. Gandhi’s forms of religion have been creative and active, practically “immixing itself in the world”, and providing an example in his own life. It is just because of this that he is more than the philosopher, as he is more than the politician, and is the great religious leader.

When Mr. Gandhi was asked for his practical proposals for resisting a Japanese invasion, he replied that a few stout



hearts, bent on non-violent resistance, would be enough. He has preached that men should always sleep as men sharing a pillow with death. For the North West Frontier he suggested that the defenders should lie down in the roads and let the horsemen of the enemy ride over them. When one considers the scenes of communal massacre that have taken place in the Punjab, and the present prospect of war by intransigent men in Kashmir, it may well be that this, by comparison, is a counsel, not of futility, but of reason and light. Any policy has to be judged in the perspective of the alternatives. Mr. Gandhi's policy at least has the virtue of being radical and simple enough. "Always be killed rather than kill. Don't trouble about executing justice, if this involves force." This is what it amounts to—or that to which it seems to amount.

To Amiya Chakravarty in a private letter Gandhiji wrote (21st January, 1941): "Ahimsa does however teach us to bear such sorrows, for its votaries have a living faith in the indestructibility of life and so they imbibe the art of dying cheerfully without seeking to kill their opponents." Elsewhere he said: "Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, i.e. truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest of friends. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is like sleep, a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr."

In Mrs. M. Graham Polak's fascinating book, *Mr. Gandhi: the Man*, she tells the illuminating story of Gandhi's reply to a legal client of his, an Indian who confessed to theft. "But why did you do it?" asked Mr. Gandhi. "You knew you were stealing, and you knew the penalty. Why, then, did you do it?" "I had to live," replied the man with finality. "You had to live?" echoed Mr. Gandhi softly. "Why?" This illustrates the reverse side of Gandhi's attitude to life and death. The courageous might be reincarnated. The idea and essential self of them would not die. As for the cowards and those who clung to the physical body—there was no inherent reason why they should live.

"Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you."

"But love them more than your friends?" "Yes: because

your true friends will understand. Yes: but by the example of non-violence showing to them their error. Train yourself in charity which is difficult; and do this just when and where it is difficult."

"Never at all to restrain them? Would it be prudent or right or other than quite iniquitous to train children this way? Should not one train them in fair play, but also constrain them to it? Is the opposite justice?"

"Judge not, that you be not judged. . . . What is justice and who shall administer it? At least be modest before history in passing your judgements. Does not ill-doing rather require medical attention? To understand all is to pardon all, alike the crime and the punishment."

This is how the argument, to and fro, can run. But do we not end only in Oriental vastnesses and vaguenesses? Do we know so precisely what is ill-doing that we can cure it medically? Mr. Gandhi hints that we always should try to cure it medically. Is not ill-doing in part that which society will not tolerate, although something which quite sane people, very intelligent, shrewd people, may think could be to their immediate advantage? Is not society entitled to protect itself by justice, and to restrain others who defy all process of equity and law? And may there not, as Plato said, be some standards of justice which always hold, apart from the temporary advantage of the socially stronger?

Yes and yes. But must not this true justice be based upon imaginative knowledge of the crime and of the apt punishment, and be inspired by what Augustine called righteousness and what I will call charity? There's the issue. And how much charity? Must not charity itself be fair to all, not generous to some? Be inspired by knowledge and the object's true interest, even his punishment; be more than sentimentality and masochism?

We are discussing war and the relations of peoples and states. In this matter is the Mahatma a "practical statesman"? It is interesting to note President Franklin Roosevelt's attitude, on this issue of restraining force, in the early 1930s. Mr. Roosevelt was "a practical statesman". His attitude is surprisingly like that of M. K. Gandhi in its practical conclusions. I quote from Charles Austen Beard's book on

*American Foreign Policy in the Making.* Mr. Roosevelt said: "The primary purpose of the United States of America is to avoid being drawn into war" (1935). He spoke of a policy of co-operation, but co-operation "by every peaceable means and without entanglement". In the days when the League was discussing restraints upon Italy, when that nation embarked upon imperial aggression in Ethiopia, Mr. Roosevelt said: "I wish to voice the hope of the people and the Government of the United States that an amicable solution will be found and that peace will be maintained" . . . "This Government is determined not to become involved in the controversy and is anxious for the restoration and maintenance of peace."

It may be said, of course, by critics that, at this time, Mr. Roosevelt's policy was merely dishonest; that he did not mean a word of it; that, in order to get elected, he had given certain pledges to the isolationist, William Randolph Hearst; and that, anyhow, he changed this policy later. He did so when he could get enough public opinion behind him, instead of being swayed by the cowardly love of comfort and desire to be left alone which had hitherto characterized opinion, and which had been re-enforced by pacifism and isolationism. Until then he talked about neutrality and the horrors of war. But I suggest that we are not entitled to charge President Roosevelt, in this way, with bad faith. It may also be said that Mr. Gandhi was far more bellicose than Mr. Roosevelt, with what his envenomed critics call "Pharisaical talk" about peace, while doing nothing to defend it except for a national interest. Mr. Gandhi at least proposed to take positive measures to protest on behalf of peace, measures involving heavy sacrifice, even of life, measures of disciplined non-violent resistance. How then does Mr. Gandhi, the critic may say, emerge by comparison with a world statesman such as Mr. Roosevelt? Let us measure them by the same measure.

## CHAPTER LXIII

I HAD COME to India chiefly to settle one issue, of so much concern to humanity. Had the Mahatma a new practical gospel and a new practical policy for the world? Just how much charity, and how much justice, did his gospel require?

One of the best known elements of this gospel was the preaching of *ahimsa*, non-violence and no use of force, as an absolute duty. I could agree with the Mahatma when he put certain reservations, in politics and law, to a great educational doctrine. But about these very reservations he seemed to speak with so uncertain a voice himself, to incline so readily to substitute for them the unconditional dogma of no force. Was that dogma right?

First, was it a dogma for the common man, for the whole world, for everybody?

If so, my clear conclusion was that it was wrong; that absolute pacifism was wrong; that the *Gita* as usually interpreted, as interpreted by the monks of Belur, was right. I was uncompromising in that conclusion.

It is true that no mortal man or mortal tribunal can judge finally. That is the prerogative of God. Or, as some would say, it is the prerogative of history—an uncertain and muffled witness. All human justice then is carried out within the framework of this doubt; and a certain humility is called for in judges and in those who deal with crimes and punishment. But this does not remove from among principles the quality of justice or from practical application the duty to execute justice as well as may be possible. This duty is categorical.

To execute justice means to restrain injustice, not by exhortation only but effectively. Charity will devise many means of restraining injustice, as, for example, by enlightening the ignorant—moving the heart, and awakening to new views the unjust. A sincere charity will never be governed by, will never praise, hate (as do the followers of tyrants). Although the right to life and the value of life is not absolute as

Schweitzer says, yet charity will never destroy life if human wit can detect any alternative cure.

What is absolute is not life or respect for life—for life might be dedicated to preying, rapine and destruction—but charity and mercy and respect for those gifts of life, such as reason and creation, which give mundane life its justification.

In the beginning was apish man who, when he asserted his will and his egoism against his world, his society and his Creator, was guilty of evil will and a sin, springing not from conscious choice but from the very limitation and aggressiveness of his nature. But as this man became rational and respected reason, or had the grace to come to respect it and the divine order, then apish man was redeemed and became a good baboon, and perhaps sometimes even, by the grace of God, a good man.

How great is the task of restraining hate, egoism and the love of war! How great, before all things, is charity, and its child, hatred of violence and war! How the love of power, unlimited power, is the very root of all evil, making ever a new Babel! But the disciplining of hate does not spell the abandonment of justice or of the reason which dictates justice.

There are indeed certain offenders whom the threat of punishment does not deter, but makes more stiff-necked and stimulates to offence. To abrogate punishment, however, here will not cure the disease which is an anarchism and aggressiveness dependent upon mistrust and fear of their fellows. What they need to learn is that punishment will never come upon them arbitrarily and capriciously, as would be in accordance with their own natures; and that their fellows desire to play more fairly by them than they desire to play fairly by their fellows. Where punishment should be abrogated is where, not evil-will springing from pride and fear, but social circumstance dictates the offence—as where a man steals from another's superfluities to relieve (as it is in accordance with natural law that he should relieve) the starvation of his children; or where the man is indeed the victim of disease or defect. It is not the case that, because human justice is imperfect, therefore there should be no punishment and no forcible restraint, where fear and pride cannot, as yet, be more fundamentally eradicated from the ill-conditioned character.

If, then, *ahimsa* is not a duty under all circumstances for all, what is its meaning?

It is a duty of the law-abiding citizen not to be violent. This is commonplace, although perhaps not so entirely commonplace in a violent world where civil war is preached as a duty.

It is a duty for the leaders of thought, and for men whose vocation is not that of a policeman, but as educators and moral physicians, to set an unqualified example. So throughout the Middle Ages the Christian clergy were under canonical obedience not to shed blood, because one who does this cannot be the best mediator between man and man, reconciling enemies and expelling hate. The conscripting of the clergy as soldiers is one of the monstrous abortions of the tyrant-state, which is founded on power and fear.

This spirit of *ahimsa* was and is a vocational duty of education, lived out in the life of the educator. It is not for the medical man in a mental hospital to wrestle with the violent insane. It is for the warders, muscular men trained for this job, who know, as their professional duty, how to use just such force as may be necessary to do this, but no more, and to place would-be homicides under constraint. This is *their* vocation or function in a functional world; and effective cure by mental medicine, certainly without displays of violence, is the physician's function or *dharma*. There is a functional vocation of total pacifism, but it is no more for all always than the vocation of the monk is for all. The distinction of conduct arises directly from the distinction of vocation, as the *Gita* says. The old distinction between those who use spiritual, and those who use secular arms, is sound. The soldier is also sacred, as much as the priest and man of God, in his vocation of arms in the sincere cause of justice. But it is not for him, though he be a psalmist, to build the Temple. This is Solomon's right, and not David's. There is here no "double morality"; but a different emphasis in different circumstances on charity and on justice.

Just here, then, lies the truth of Gandhiji's gospel. The world does not yet understand how the lust for power, which overcomes statesmen and commissars, capitalists and political communist fanatics, must be met by *ahimsa*. The Mahatma preaches this noble truth. Here is his major fundamental

contribution. But this does not mean that the establishment of peace and law in the world should be *obstructed* by those who refuse to execute justice or to impose restraint against the cynical aggressor, in defence of the victims and the oppressed. Here St. Peter and St. Augustine are right. Here the *Gita*, in its most literal interpretation, is right. "Therefore, Arjuna, strike." For just authority "bears not the sword in vain".

## CHAPTER LXIV

IT is sometimes said that the Mahatma is not a teacher but a politician, and a very astute one at that. These people, misunderstanding the punctilios of the theologian, think that he uses religion to put plainer politicians off the scent. Like Disraeli in his attitude to Gladstone, they do not object to his concealing the trump cards up his sleeve but they object to his implying that God put them there.

An astute politician would, from all I know of them, almost certainly have seen to it that he became Governor General of India. However, it is fully possible to see M. K. Gandhi as first and foremost the man who, following Tilak and Gokhale, roused India against British rule.

There is, of course, also the biased judgement that M. K. Gandhi was not only a politician but a wrecker, and that nothing constructive could be done in India so long as he remained alive. This prejudice is a variant of the vulgar view that he was a species of Tammany boss. I need scarcely say that this is not to be confused with the straight-forward imperial view, intelligible on its own suppositions, of Lord Curzon and Mr. Churchill. I do not doubt that those who disturbed the accord of Caiaphas and Pilate were said to be "wreckers". The pertinent question is: Wreckers of what? Of Indian independence; of Hindu-Moslem accord; or of what specifically? Is Gandhi, of all Hindus, the one most disliked by Moslems?

Those who hold this view often indeed speak with great detailed information, and their view demands some respect. It involves criticism of the judgement not only of Cripps, Roosevelt's advisers and Mountbatten, but of Lord Wavell, "the man on the spot". These critics can argue that, had Mr. Gandhi advised Congress co-operation, e.g., at the time of the first Cripps' Mission, gradual advances would have been then begun, although these same critics usually deplore the precipitate inclusion of advance in freedom accorded so early as it was. Their constructive position seems to



be that further delay would have increased Moslem-Hindu accord; or that the British should have remained until such time (if ever) as this accord was spontaneously reached—a view scarcely likely to lead to peace with the Hindu majority. In the last resort this judgement rests upon a subordination of general principles of justice and majority rights to “reason of state”, a philosophy usually better expounded in Germany than in Britain. It, moreover, rests on a particular view of British-Moslem relations. It recalls to my mind the old objections of the East Indian Company to Christian missions, and the recent objections to the campaign for “temple entry”—principles must be subject to Caesar and to a quiet life for the *Raj*. It is doubtful whether the importance to Britain of being, not indeed pro-Moslem, but biased pro-Moslem is not gravely exaggerated in more parts of the world than one; and whether Mecca is really so much more important than Benares in *real-politik*, that it is worth while for the world’s third greatest Power to depart, or even to appear to depart, from the dignity of impartiality.

Finally, even on the chosen grounds of “reason of state” and “security”, it may be shrewdly doubted whether the view here held of the strategy of South-East Asia and of the Khyber Pass is not founded upon a radical misappreciation of mass-forces. It is not the Moslems who can hand over the keys of India. Nor does covert encouragement of Indian disagreement, therefore, have even strategic excuse. This is to-day probably common ground between most British and Indians. Properly appreciated, even British interest, not to speak of world interest, lies in the collaboration of the two Dominions, not in leaning towards the one or the other. It lies in Gandhi’s Khilafat policy.

Broadly, this view of the Mahatma is a view derogatory to human grandeur. It is the myopic view of the Little-endians, when looking through a telescope. The little end alone is turned to the object, which becomes microscopic. It is the view of men, efficient within their limits, who are temperamentally incapable of appreciating how the mind of such a man as Gandhi works. They can only suspect a plot of some especially refined kind. It is merely not the case that M. K. Gandhi fomented division in India or bloodshed among its

inhabitants. Whatever conduced to this was there already or lay in vaulting ambitions out of accord alike with economic or geographic realities and with the spirit of accommodation and disinterestedness.

In an article on India in the London *Daily Telegraph* of 16th January, 1948, Sir James Grigg, late Secretary for War, described M. K. Gandhi: "with his unique combination of saint and Tammany boss, he was out of proportion and distorted the whole picture; and after his departure" (i.e. death) "I felt sure that a better solution—better for all—would be practicable and even probable." A comment on this school of thought comes from a quite unexpected and, under the circumstances, a most striking source. Mr. L. S. Amery, the brilliant Conservative Secretary for India, who can certainly not be accused of undue prejudice in favour of Congress, wrote in the London *Sunday Chronicle* of 1st February, 1948, as follows:

"The outside world is little concerned with the manoeuvres of Gandhi as a Congress politician. But it may yet be moved incalculably by the 'soul force' of Gandhi the man. The spirit of our age has been directed almost entirely to material schemes of social betterment, to mechanical projects for the prevention of war by the methods of war. We are beginning to doubt increasingly whether the methods will, in fact, preserve us from the atomic bomb or ensure peace and contentment in our midst.

"May the better line of approach not be that of the social reformer who in his own person preached the happiness of the simple life and the human dignity of the Untouchables; of the opponent of British rule in India who yet understood and even loved the English people; of the devout Hindu who yet sought spiritual communion both with Christianity and with Islam; of the pacifist who believed that peace could only be won by the conversion of the individual soul to the hatred of war?"

Even violent resistance could be countenanced on occasions by this preacher of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* was, as it were, for the elect, for those who had the vocation. Those who could not understand the doctrine could use, rather than cowardly flight, the more primitive methods of resistance which human experience suggested.

"I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a hopeless witness to her own dishonour. If we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by the force of suffering, i.e. non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting."

Does this mean, then, that the Mahatma is a hypocrite? It does not. It means no more than that he is entirely consistent, as I have already shown, in his distinctive and functional doctrine of *ahimsa*—"those that have ears let them hear"—which is for the select like the teaching of the Lord, who spoke to the rest in parables; and is quite distinct from the Western doctrine of categorical pacifism for all.

The man who not only fasted but who, in the famous trial before the British tribunal at Ahmedabad, in 1922, took on himself the whole responsibility of guilt because his people had *not* heeded his warning against violence—this man can scarcely be accused of playing fast and loose with the gospel of non-violence. "I wish to endorse all the blame that the learned Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay, Madras and Chauri-Chaura occurrences. . . . But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth, when they understood the truth from my lips."

The Mahatma is, of course, the great national leader. And yet note how, in his *Autobiography*, he describes his attitude towards the British in the days of the Boer War. "Suffice it to say," he writes, "that my loyalty to the British rule drove me to participation with the British in that war. I felt that, if I demanded rights as a British citizen, it was also my duty, as such, to participate in the defence of the British Empire. I held then that India could achieve her complete emancipation only within and through the British Empire." That, as we have said, was the origin of Gandhi's Natal ambulance corps.

M. K. Gandhi departed from this view when he felt that the cause of India had been betrayed and the masses of India exploited in and after the First World War. The advance of Indian freedom had been promised in return for loyal service in

the field. What followed were the Rowlatt Acts and other repressive regulations and the events which first disfigured the name of Amritsar, which has been disfigured again by its own peoples to-day.<sup>1</sup>

. Mohandas Gandhi has a peculiar distinction, on the level of statesmanship, among the statesmen of to-day. He has not only, *pater patrias*, brought an old country (however mutilated, as he protested) to freedom and a new Dominion into existence. He has shown, as a great national leader, a talent which of recent years only Giuseppe Mazzini has possessed in equal degree—and Mazzini had few of the same practical responsibilities.

Perhaps because he, the great nationalist, the national leader of an emerging country and an emerging Asia, is yet more than only a politician, M. K. Gandhi has had the talent to combine two things, so often held apart and even in opposition. He is the nationalist and also the internationalist, the leader of the Indian masses who yet never for one moment ceased to be the citizen of the world.

The great secret of his power lies just here. Only Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler aspire to come into comparison—and into what a pitiful, contrasting, destructive comparison. . . . Gandhi's greatness is that, when the history of India is written, his history must necessarily also be written. But nevertheless he has also a gospel for the world and belongs, equally in his own right, to the history of the world and of human civilization. His gospel is that of the combination of successful resistance to evil with repudiation of resistance to evil by force and the multiplication of the eddies of violence.

Perhaps the most appropriate memorial to him would be if Mr. Nehru would summon yet another conference at Delhi, again attended by representatives of the Soviet Union, but Orthodox and Moslems this time, to meet their fellows outside, and to see whether they could discover, before too late, some way to an emotional and political *détente*.

<sup>1</sup> Without endeavouring to write here what is more properly the history of India it should be pointed out that what had happened at Amritsar was severely condemned in the British Parliament and that the general tendencies of the Montagu-Chelmsford policy, and of the Act of 1919, were usually loyally, if too slowly, carried into practice.

## CHAPTER LXV

IF, THEN, I understood the Mahatma aright, he comes preaching a new Gospel of *Ahimsa*, which is both the old religious gospel of charity, and the new psychological teaching of trained and disciplined co-operation. He is the Great Educator.

He invites the devoted band of teachers who go out as apostles of this gospel, to accept a discipline and a rule almost monastic. They are the elect vanguard who arouse men to an understanding of the miracles that can be wrought in human relations by a conscientious good will. It is their self-dedication which enables them to do this.

When there is an established judge, then the duty of citizens and of human beings is to live peaceably together in creative activity. Where there is no established judge—and how often there is not—to determine in detachment the just cause from the unjust, then no one has a right, save in fear and trembling of the verdict of history, to use violence to make his cause prevail against his neighbour. If he is conscientiously convinced of the justice of his cause, the most to which he is clearly entitled is to use non-violent non-co-operation, the obstinate, conscientious resistance without hate, of the *satyagrahi* and of the non-violent and sit-down strike.

He had no right, therefore, whatsoever to engage—there being already judges, removable if they abuse their office; and anyhow no judge commanding such a course—in civil war, social war, or Marxist class war. He had also no right to engage in national war either for his own ends, singly or collectively, or by abetting. A thousand times in the last few months the history of India has underlined the danger when mass passion gets out of hand.

This is the new gospel of the Mahatma; and with all of it I agreed basically and utterly.

But how, then, in the case where a judge does give a judgement not repugnant to natural law, and calls on citizens,

including citizens of the world, to enforce it against the criminal or aggressor? "He beareth not the sword in vain but as a punishment to evil doers."

This was the issue which faced, two millennia ago, the pacifist Primitive Church. In the end it solved it, with St. Augustine (here following the Epistles), by declaring that justice must be executed by spiritual persuasion if possible, but, if need be, by the arm of force for the peace of the whole—a justice genuinely inspired by righteousness, that is by the will to maintain peace, which is the expression of charity, for its own sake and not for any private advantage or from desire for the death of the sinner. In brief, it decided against a pacifism which ignored the other aspect of the love which sustains a harmonious world—which ignored the face of justice.

What was the Mahatma's decision on this issue? That was still left obscure by the Simla and Delhi interviews. I knew that the Mahatma had counselled fighting to those who did not comprehend his doctrine. But how about those who did, when the issue was the enforcement of a judgement to uphold a tranquil liberty and a tranquil order? I wrote to his secretary, now the Minister of Health of India, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, to get enlightenment. First, the reply came that Mohandas Gandhi was a pacifist who would always be against the use of force:

"a. Of course Gandhiji stands for no armies anywhere, i.e. that is his ideal. The press report—which I myself have not seen—must be a figment of the imagination. . . .

"b. The answer to this question must be in the affirmative. For a true believer in non-violence there can be no such thing as co-operation in war and such non-co-operation must operate even against one's own government.

"c. This is a difficult question. Logically the believer in non-violence will abjure the use of force in any form at any time and in all circumstances. A world government *should* be able to non-co-operate with lawless or evil forces in a non-violent manner in the same way as a rebellious people can against a tyrannical government. But, of course, a certain amount of use of force does exist and will continue to exist and I take it that we shall have to have a world police force in the beginning, at any rate. The jailing of an offender against the

law is the use of force. But I feel that even such force as a world police organization would use, would be used when and if all non-violent methods had failed. The latter should not, however, fail if they have moral sanction behind them." He continued to discuss the use of economic sanctions.

But then came from Rajkumari a second letter.

I was lucky enough to get ten minutes to myself with Gandhiji yesterday and showed him your letter and told him my replies to you. He approved of them. But he was more strong than I was in regard to your question *c*. He says he has no difficulty in accepting that police force against those who will not submit to due process of law. Non-violent non-co-operation may, in some cases, be too vague and therefore impossible.

This is, therefore, further enlightenment for you.

Best wishes,

Yours in haste,

AMRIT KAUR.

When I had read this letter I felt my mission in India was now accomplished and my pilgrimage ended. This was far more than some qualification of pacifism. Here was the reasoned reconciliation, in one gospel, of charity and justice. I hoped indeed to return to India later to obtain yet further clarification and to make assurance doubly sure as to my interpretation. But this was not to be.

The need is a practical one: to establish the world organs of law and police, the new *imperium*; but also—and primarily, normally, fundamentally—to multiply "work-shops of souls", monasteries, *ashrams*, educational centres of devoted men dedicated by discipline to the re-education of humanity in the technique, as children and as adults, of co-operation.

We had now a completed teaching, a full gospel of love, able to be set beside and over against the gospels of hate and war of which the world is full. It held together in all its parts. Here was the basis which could now be expounded, the fundamental truth which could also be lived. The non-Christian East offered of itself a doctrine which brought it into unity with the Christian gospel of Jesus, the Apostles and the Church, as over against the power lust of the restless West.

## CHAPTER LXVI

AT THAT time prevision could not show me the gathering of the friends of the *ashram*; the singing of the hymn, "As I survey the Wondrous Cross"; the beginning of the fast in Delhi, in January, 1948, against communal discord and strife. I did not see this later scene, however much it might lie in the logic of events and of human irreligion, fanaticism, hardness of heart which stood ready to murder. The final fast of the old man, was that—following the so-called "Miracle of Bengal", where he produced Hindu-Moslem peace in that immense province—for the broader brotherhood of Hindu and Moslem and Sikh in India, the end of fratricidal rapine and of the murder of refugees in the Punjab and Kashmir. As he said at Jagapur, on January 13, he was "not going to be satisfied without a heart understanding between the two communities, and this was not possible unless the Hindu and Moslem were prepared to respect each other's religion, leaving the process of conversion absolutely free and voluntary".

Man struck down man, old, young, women, children, because in an endless cycle of mutual recrimination each remembered what had been done to his own kin. The one side cried, "justice", "honour", "revenge", and the other spoke of "atrocities", "assassinations", "blood crying to heaven". Some said that honour forbade peace, the brigands' honour. Here the methods which the Mahatma had throughout life condemned had been thought alone respectable. The Hindu Mahasabha spoke of its warrior caste with its warrior duty; the Moslem spoke of the duty of "holy war", *jihad*; the Sikh worshipped with, beside the Holy Book, the drawn Sword as his symbol. The consecrated sword waiting the word of the private or the tribal conscience, the consecrated fanaticism to shed the blood of man, the blessed Cainist homicide. . . .

Against that the Mahatma offered the protest of an atonement fast, a penance for sin, a non-violent witness against them before history and for all time, like the rebuke of Moses. It had to be



such a witness, however much the Mahatma might claim that it was only to bring one's own community and people to a change of heart that one was permitted to fast. But it is not the stone tables here of the accusing Law, but the body, that breaks. Again groups of the revengeful among his own people were not lacking to shout, "Let Gandhi die!"

All that is left to me is the indelible impression of human pettiness, of Faust's own utter failure of fulfilment, compared with the heights of grandeur to which, even by natural religion, the human spirit can rise. It is in such sincerity, integrity, sacrifice, and in faith, may we say, in the Cross which saves, that humanity is justified. And those who despise a humble heart, it were better that they were cast into the sea. . . . I do not know whose visage others detect here. *Ecce homo*.

To those conventionalists who are shocked by this or who detect in it by implication bad theology, I reply: Let them consider the counsel of à Kempis to everyman, and the very title of the *Imitatio*. And if it be said that only the Christian can imitate perfectly and this by faith *formed by charity*, I agree and reply: Those whom St. Augustine, speaking of Socrates, called "souls naturally Christian", imitating imperfectly, may yet, by God's illimitable grace, stand as a rebuke and a witness against most Christians. Let them go and do better than this heathen.

The Hindu habit of making gods, which Christian, Jew and Moslem alike condemn, I have already criticized earlier in this book. Pride is not the Mahatma's fault. However, to the tender-minded, I will say *Ecce servitor Domini*.

The last fast was broken on Sunday, January 18th, following communal pledges of co-operation, processions of Moslems and Pathans as well as Sikhs and Hindus through the streets of Bombay and Delhi acclaiming the Mahatma's desire for conciliation. It was marked, in Gandhiji's own room, by the singing of Hindu and Moslem chants and of Cardinal John Henry Newman's immortal hymn, "Lead, Kindly Light."

Into the international press, reports began to come in and to take the headlines: "Clouds rise over Kashmir", "Tension relaxed".

The five-day fast was over. It was Mohandas Gandhi's fifteenth fast—the longest had been for twenty-one days. When

the Moslems celebrated, on 27th January, the annual feast of their local saint, Huzrat Khwaja Qutabuddin Bakhtier Kaki, at Mehrauli, outside Delhi, the Mahatma was able to be present to address them, and to see how blessed were the peacemakers with his own eyes, as the two communities mixed. The communal tension which had threatened rapine and massacre across India had been, once again as in Bengal, relaxed, thanks to the moral example of the old man who had used the ancient technique of the saints and prophets, the fast for the sins of the people, as Elijah and John the Baptist had fasted and Christ had fasted in the days of the first Lent. The widening circles of violence and hate in the pool of Indian life, radiating with apparent inevitability from its centre in the Punjab, where extremists had trodden even the national flag under foot because it restrained their hates, adding retaliation to violence, and violence to retaliation, ceased to boil and spread. The *karma* of the predetermined consequences of violence was met by the meritorious acts of the saints. The waters became still again. It seemed that the good had triumphed over evil. Gandhi appeared in unusually good spirits and spoke of living, like the men of old, to a hundred and twenty-five.

It was about this time that Vincent Sheean, who had earlier written *In Search of History*, had his talks with Gandhiji. On 13th November he had left New York with the intention of seeing Gandhi and of asking him to teach him "something about life's meaning, purpose and significance". "I have suspected for some years that it was not merely a tale told by an idiot." "I have called myself an atheist, but I don't really know what that word means." One thing, Sheean tells us, that Gandhi then said was that, even if it could be shown that the *Gita* did not support his doctrine of *Ahimsa*, he would still believe it. Orthodox Hindus might think he had been over-influenced by the Sermon on the Mount. For the rest the Mahatma asserted his belief in God as the reality sustaining all things—"a Living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and re-creates,"<sup>1</sup> but that is also Truth and Love. He re-emphasized the discipline of

<sup>1</sup> C. F. Andrews: *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*. Cf. Vincent Sheean, "Gandhi's Religious Teaching", *New York Herald Tribune*, 8 Feb. 1948.

renunciation. There could be no good end, moreover, achieved by bad means. On the third day, 30th January, Sheean had proposed to ask the Mahatma to explain his words in *Young India* of 13th November, 1924. "Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and beauty and goodness will be added to you . . . that is the truth and beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for." That question was never to be answered.

About the same time Rajkumari Amrit Kaur must have put to him my question how any one living in the Western scene should follow in the path that Gandhiji himself had walked, and where one should begin. Rajkumari wrote to me, in a letter of 3rd February: "I read your letter to me to him, and he listened to it with his wonted interest. He asked me to send you his good wishes and to say that the true soldier against evil fights the evil force at his door. For him there is no question of where he should 'begin'."<sup>1</sup>

It is true that there were rumours of conspiracy. On the 20th January a student, Madan Lal, had exploded an ineffective bomb near the Mahatma. On enquiring, the police suspected a connection with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh or Association of Volunteers to Save the Country, an association partly athletic and partly cultural, like the Czech *sokols*, upholding, with fascist extremism, the cause of Hindu nationalism and Hindu dominance, secret in organization, and not guiltless of trust in terrorist methods. Their banning and the prosecution of their leaders and of some of those of the orthodox Hindu Party, the Hindu Mahasabha, was later demanded by Jai Prakash Narain. But the Mahatma on this occasion appealed for calm, asked the police not to treat the lad violently and went on with his prayers for Hindu-Moslem accord. The interruption was slight and the cause of peace still seemed to prosper. The second aspect of Hinduism, that face of Kali which is black, and of which the tongue licks the entrails of corpses, the aspect that expressed the Primal Energy of Vishvanath, seemed to lose force, and reason increasingly to prevail in relations with the Moslems and even to check the Akali fanatics among the Sikhs of the Sword and the

<sup>1</sup> It must be said that to know the intimate mind of Gandhiji we must wait until the Indian members of his *ashram* and such Europeans as Miss Slade, Agatha Harrison and Horace Alexander have time to write about it for us as it should be written and as they alone, and no mere visitor, can know it.



*[Photo: International News]*

The death of Mahatma Gandhi  
Lord and Lady Mountbatten at the cremation ceremony



*[Photo: Paul Popper.]*

Lord Mountbatten broadcasting from All India Radio

Book, the men whom once the Mahatma had disciplined to non-violence. Yahoo-Caliban was on the defensive.

Margaret Bourke-White must have been one of the last people to interview him. "How would you use non-violence against the atomic bomb?" she records that she asked him.<sup>1</sup> "By prayerful action . . . I would come out in the open and let the pilot see that I had not the face of evil against him." Gandhi paused. "The pilot would not see my face at such a height," he said, "but that longing in our hearts that he won't come to harm would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened. Those who were done to death in Hiroshima by the bombs—if they had died with that prayerful action, died openly with prayer in their hearts, without uttering a groan, the war would not have ended as disgracefully as it has."

It was then that evil struck again, and, in the very act, showed its own essential anarchy and nihilism, as the Denying Spirit, since the assassin divided his own community, splitting apart into *castes* that which had hitherto been united in Hindustan. Of this act even the leader, be it said, of the R.S.S., the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, said that "the man who committed this dastardly act has done the country the greatest harm", for the true patriotism fell beneath the blow of the false and the apostle of unity before the hand of the sower of division. Later, the Maharaja of Alwar having become suspect with his *diwan* of encouraging the conspirators, he was temporarily deposed.

An intelligent man, the Poona editor of the extremist *Hindu Rashtra*, a Hindu of the Hindu Mahasabha, Nathuram Vinayak Godse by name, had persuaded himself that murder was a righteous act of indignation against him who by charity betrayed Nathuram's right to hate his enemies and his countrymen's right to hate their enemies, the sons of Islam. Nathuram Godse was a partisan and a zealot. The assassin of the Hindu from Porbandar was not, as all at first thought, if not a Moslem then a man suffering under great provocation. It was not one of those who had suffered who assassinated the man who preached forgiveness by the victims. It was one who had lived quietly in remote Poona, a Hindu of the Hindus, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, who observed all the Vedic law of righteousness. What was Caiaphas for cold hate compared

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, 1 March 1948. This interview took place on the 30th January.

with this man? "I am not at all sorry for what I have done," was his comment. Nevertheless, who shall judge him for unrighteousness? For him zealotry excused murder, as it will always do for those who take the law into their own hands. Nathuram was not the only man in the world with chauvinist and neo-fascist ideas, for whom the end condoned the means. Certainly no one should hold guilty the good men of the Mahasabha, who have only sought to keep the law according to the law.

The Mahatma had seemed to have prescience of the evil. To Margaret Bourke-White he had said, a few days earlier, that the troubles of the time gave him small encouragement to live. The night before he had recited, half-humorously, the Gujarati rhyme:

"This is a strange world,  
How long have I to play this game?"

On Friday, the 30th January, he was delayed by Sardar Patel in conversation, Patel who had favoured sterner measures with Pakistan, and had at last torn himself away. "Let me go now. It is prayer time." At 5.10 Delhi local time, he left the Birla House at Delhi—the house of the rich man whose works he disapproved but whom he personally liked, and which, unlike the *ashram* in the sweepers' quarters, could accommodate the crowds—with his two grandnieces, Ava and Manu, to go across to the pergola from which he took the prayer meetings. Next week he proposed to return to his own community and disciples in Wardha.

Clad in a khaki jacket and blue pullover, Nathuram approached the Mahatma as, still weak from the fast, Gandhi mounted the pergola steps. "You are late," he said. Nathuram bowed low, with his hands together in the Hindu fashion of the salutation of peace. He bowed so low that bystanders thought that he wished to touch the Mahatma's sandalled feet. Gandhi, clad as usual in his white shawl, smiled, said something about being indeed late, and returned with joined hands the salutation. As Mrs. Polak, a close observer, records, Gandhiji had "the kindest eyes in the world", the eyes which smiled at Godse. Then, taking his small Beretta automatic pistol, Nathuram Godse shot the Mahatma with three shots at close range. In the words of the London *Times*, describing

Gandhiji's death, "Mr. Gandhi raised his hands above his head in the same salutation and fell down"—the salutation that is also the posture of prayer.

"*Ai Ram, Ai Ram,*" he said in the words of the local saint of his own *ashram*, Valmiki. He was carried into the house and asked for water which he could not swallow. He lived long enough, some witnesses assert, to say, "If they do not want me, I do not wish to live." For twenty-eight minutes he lived. Then he died as Ava sang the chants from the *Gita*.

"He who, wherever he goes, is attached to no person and to no place by ties of flesh; who accepts good and evil alike, neither welcoming the one nor shrinking from the other—take him to be one who is at one with the Infinite."

The announcement of the death was made to the crowd by one of the disciples of the *ashram*, quite simply: "Bapuji—our father—is dead."

Such was the crush of the throng that, to the end that all might see even at a distance, they put the body on a tilted bier outside the house, with a floodlight turned on it. Andrew Mellor of the London press reported: "Covered in white except for his head, the Mahatma's face in death looked serene and beautiful. It shewed no trace of pain." At the head they put a lamp with five wicks, representing the five elements of air, light, water, earth and fire. Nehru spoke to India that night, only just able to control his emotion: "Friends and comrades, the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere." Calm of face, Gandhiji must yet have died with the sense that he was rejected, not only by the nine conspirators, but (through the vengeful and selfish emotion that urged them also) by the mankind for which, for seventy-eight years of his life, he had laboured. Satan had won.

However, the outburst of violence expected by many did not take place. Men did not, save here and there, ask for blood. Whom should they strike down? It was but too clear that, in the Psalmist's words, "mine own familiar friend hath lifted up his heel against me." They were silent, ashamed and awed. No sooner did the news go out of Gandhiji's death than the good that is in man asserted itself, thanks to the grace that can touch human reason by the flame of the divine reason. It rose, this good, by his sacrifice, to even new



and unanticipated heights. When Gandhi knew of Madan Lal's attempt, he must have known of his <sup>own</sup> danger, even although he bid the police not to treat Madan Lal harshly. The night before the assassination, he had told his secretary, Bishwan: "Bring me all my important letters. I must reply to them to-day, for to-morrow I may never be."

And now he was gone, messages came in from the world over. One was from the King of England and of India, George VI, the successor of the Grand Moghuls, whose representative, that good Pilate, stood for an hour beside the bier. Other messages came from the President of the United States, the Cardinal of Westminster, the Premiers of Great Britain and Canada and South Africa—from the old enemy, Jan Smuts. "Gandhi," he said, "was one of the greatest men of any time. . . . A prince among men has passed away, and we grieve with India in her irreparable loss." A few reporters and journalists, indeed, recalled in their notices the old quarrels, spoke of his pride and his acceptance of the title of Mahatma. "Who do men say that I am?" He did not ask for the title; talked whimsically of its embarrassments; abruptly told one enthusiast at his meetings who repeatedly asked him to call himself a god such as Ramakrishna had become: "Sit down and keep quiet." However, Vincent Sheean uses this same thoughtless phrase, and so will India.

In a memorial notice on the Mahatma, entitled "Bapu", Jawaharlal Nehru, Premier of India, wrote in the final issue of *Harijan* in its old form, on 15th February, 1948, as follows:

"Even in his death there was a magnificence and complete artistry. It was from every point of view a fitting climax to the man and to the life he had lived. Indeed it heightened the lesson of his life. He died in the fullness of his powers and as he would no doubt have liked to die, at the moment of prayer. He died a martyr to the cause of unity to which he had always been devoted and for which he had worked unceasingly, more specially during the past year or more. He died suddenly as all men should wish to die. There was no fading of the body or a long illness or the forgetfulness of the mind that comes with age. Why then should we grieve for him? Our memories of him will be of the Master, whose

step was light to the end, whose smile was infectious and whose eyes were full of laughter. We shall associate no failing powers with him of body or mind. He lived and he died at the top of his strength and powers, leaving a picture in our minds and in the mind of the age that we live in that can never fade away.

"That picture will not fade. But he did something much more than that, for he entered into the very stuff of our minds and spirits and changed them and moulded them. The Gandhi generation will pass away, but that stuff will remain and will affect each succeeding generation, for it has become a part of India's spirit. Just when we were growing poor in spirit in this country, Bapu came to enrich us and make us strong, and the strength he gave us was not for a moment or a day or a year but it was something added on to our national inheritance.

"Bapu has done a giant's work for India and the world and even for our poor selves, and he has done it astonishingly well. And now it is our turn not to fail him or his memory but to carry on the work to the best of our ability and to fulfil the pledges we have so often taken."

Gandhi was a humble man; but he was never servile. He knew his power and his responsibility, and he did not permit even his critics to forget this. Abruptly he told the insolent to keep to their place. He did not conceal that he was a prime minister's son. That did not please all the journalists or those who sought to patronize him because they thought themselves to be his social superiors. Other commentators, on his death, said that on the record he was a failure. He "practised asceticism—but he practised it ostentatiously and, in a sense, luxuriously". They had not been known to their friends as practising it at all. He dined, they said, with publicans and men such as the Birlas. It was reserved, however, for the French Communist journal, oddly called *Humanité*, to suggest that he was assassinated thanks to a conspiracy of British agents, an ingenuity repeated by Moscow radio, which felt that it must use the saint's bones to stir trouble in accordance with the counter-gospel to Gandhi's, the gospel of the man of strife.

The President of the United States said: "Another giant

among men has fallen in the cause of brotherhood and peace. We must now be inspired to strive with increased determination to achieve the goals of co-operation and mutual trust for which the Mahatma gave his life." But, amid the public declarations of condolence, none was more striking than that from—Mohammed Ali Jinnah. It would indeed have pleased Gandhi that it should be so. "There can be no controversy before death," said the Quaid-e-Azam. "Whatever our political differences, Gandhi was one of the greatest men produced by the Hindu community. The loss to the Dominion of India is irreparable; and it will be very difficult to fill the void created by the passing of such a great man at this moment." "He was the great figure of our times," added simply Liaquat Ali Khan. Mr. Churchill expressed himself as "shocked at this wicked crime". Later, in Westminster Abbey, a service was held for India-Pakistan relief with commemoration of M. K. Gandhi, the address being given by Sir Stafford Cripps.

On 1st February, Gandhiji was cremated by the side of the Jumna River. Throughout all the previous night the villages of India, on foot, on bicycles, in bullock-carts, the humble folk, had moved in their masses towards Delhi. By daybreak the crowd was over a million strong. Had Bernard Shaw died how small would have been the stir by comparison, because the man of words can never bear comparison in influence with the man of life—and, as de Madariaga wrote, Gandhi was not a man of talk or of action, but of life. . . . As Gandhi himself once wrote in Bengali, "my life itself is my message".

Gandhi's bier lay fifteen feet above the water's edge by the river-side, on a platform, twelve feet square, strewn with sandalwood and covered with the national colours, the white of purity, the green of courage, the saffron of the monk, the *sannyasin* and the *satyagrahi*, the devotee of *ahimsa*. Stakes of the sacred peepul tree were at the four corners. Jawaharlal Nehru was there. So were Patel and the others. The funeral cortège had come, preceded by the magnificent outriders of the Governor-General's bodyguard. But the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, the King's cousin, who with exquisite tact took his place without ceremony, accompanied by his wife and daughter, sat on the ground with the rest. Of Gandhi, literally it can be said that they buried him among

kings. The humble was exalted, and the exalted made themselves humble with the common folk to do him honour.

At length the bed on which the body lay was taken from the platform and laid upon the sandalwood bier. "Long live the Mahatma," they cried. Garlands of white jasmine and oleander were placed on the bier. Rose petals were dropped from aeroplanes on his bier—by odd irony, from bomber planes. At 4.45 the pyre was lighted. The Countess Mountbatten stood with her arm around Nehru: a symbol of the happy close of a great epoch of history. More sandalwood was added by Gandhi's two younger sons, Ramdas and Devadas. The police had to beat the shrieking crowds back with sticks. The smoke of the pyre arose white against the disc of the sinking sun, a smoke smelling of sweet sandalwood like incense smoke. Hindu chants broke from the vast throng and a cry that had its historic significance: *Mahatma Gandhi amar ho gae*—"Mahatma Gandhi has become immortal." The funeral flames rose fifteen feet in the air. Gandhiji had gone to his rest. *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*.

It was in his valedictory address that Nehru said: "The light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere . . . The light has gone out, yet this light which has illumined this country for many years will still shine . . . a thousand years from now."

At last, in the Indian night, all that was left was a low fire; and a few relatives; and the gathering up of the remains when morning came into a plain copper jar. Nehru came again and uttered a few words, almost to himself. "*Bapuji*, here are flowers. To-day, at least, I can offer them to your bones and ashes. Where shall I offer them to-morrow and to whom?" Was Gandhi, immortal, also to become remote? Or was his spirit in fact to continue to still the waters of race hate and of class hate, in India and in the world? The ashes were divided into as many as fifty portions to be scattered in different parts of India. I do not know whether even one was left over, like the Buddha's, for posterity. The main cortège went on to Allahabad, to the Sangam which I had seen, to the conflux of the Jumna and the Ganges. And there, amid tens of thousands standing by the water's edge, rushing forth to bathe in the waters, on the 12th February, 1948, the

last ashes of Mohandas Gandhi, father of the nation, apostle to the world, were lost in the on-pouring waters of the eternal and sacred Ganges. *Mahatma Gandhi amar ho gae.*

In the Palace of the Vatican, Pope Pius gave out a message: he told of his sorrow at the passing of this spiritual leader of so many. I was that day in Luxembourg, at a gathering where, for the first time since the Second World War began, leaders of German political parties, Christian parties, met with leaders of the Christian political parties of the Allies of the war, to draw up a document in amity on the future of Germany. Next night, at a banquet, I heard my friend Don Jose Aguirre of Spain, hero of the Spanish Civil War, turn to Herr Adenauer, leader of the German Party of Christian Democratic Union, and say, "For the promise of the future of Germany, for the sake of what you say and because we are Christians led by a common charity and under command to forgive and to hope, we the victims, the victims of Guernica and of the Nazi bombing of the Basque country, forgive you." And I turned to Maurice Schuman, president of the French M.R.P., and he told me of Gandhi's last message to him, of how he had told Schuman about his rebuking a friend who had turned away, disgusted, when a Moslem was murdered on his train—"You did wrong: you should have intervened." And then the Mahatma said to Schuman: "Did I live in the West I should be a Christian—if only the Christians were such for twenty-four hours in the twenty-four."

To his Saducee detractors M. K. Gandhi was a shrewd politician who understood publicity—although even to them scarcely "just" a shrewd politician. To others he was a heretic and a Westernizer, and those who thought such, the Hindu Pharisees, murdered him. To the crowds of India, with its many gods, Mohandas Gandhi was well on the road to be another god—the man who had not even tolerated with much patience those who said "Mahatma, Mahatma," and who were in spirit far from him. But for the world, which has to answer two simple questions—What did Gandhiji indeed teach? Was he right?—his significance is that of the man who went to the very core of religion.‡ He went more as sober moralist than as ecstatic prophet. He asked men to accept in simplicity its message by which all things are put into

proportion and which gives, to those who accept the light yoke of its discipline, peace of mind beyond the world's understanding. And on that perhaps the final comment is to be found in Rajkumari's letter to me, where she writes: "Few mortals can have deserved the Master's 'Well done' so richly as he and I know he has it."

I was able friendly to anticipate Schuman at that historic Luxembourg meeting, where Spaniard and French, Dutch, Belgian and German first met as possible co-workers for peace and reconstruction, not as enemies ready to kill, in paying tribute to the great soul of India. In Paris, Schuman told me, masses were said for his soul. According to the wise doctrine of the Church salvation is not by faith alone, but also by the works and spirit of charity. The pious even without the faith, who are obstructed by their circumstance of time and place from confessing Christ, may yet be supposed, if their works are of Christ and their souls' aspiration to His way, to have received before death the saving "baptism of desire", of which St. Thomas speaks. So, in God's good time and limitless mercy, they too, if truly humble, may have the beatific vision. Thus it is permissible to pray for the good estate of the soul of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and for the furtherance of his work of charity, and peace. And with this intention in London, as in Paris, masses have been said. "He imitated Christ in his own way. He said 'Blessed are the peaceful', and he was blessed in being so, even if it cost him his own life."<sup>1</sup>

It was Sri Aurobindo who wrote, in his *The Life Divine*, of which the title reminds one of the philosopher Fichte's book:

"In Europe and in India, respectively, the negation of the materialist and the refusal of the ascetic have sought to assert themselves as the sole truth and to dominate the conception of life. In India, if the result has been a great heaping of the treasures of the spirit—or of some of them—it has also been a great bankruptcy of life; in Europe, the fullness of riches and the triumphant mastery of the world's powers and possessions have progressed towards an equal bankruptcy in the things of the spirit. Nor has the intellect, which sought

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the Vatican journal, *Osservatore Romano*, 31st January, 1948.

the solution of all problems in the one term of Matter, found satisfaction in the answer it has received."

The Mahatma confronted the East with a practical life of charity and the West with the negation of the devil's gospel of power.

Faust had now finished his journey. What remained was a matter of means—to carry into effective practice the things that he had heard. These things themselves gave the peace of full satisfaction. The Mahatma, his picture painted on banners furred in a thousand council halls, was the symbol of arising India, arising Asia. The living Mahatma, whose body was now dead, remained the teacher not of India only, but of the world. The wheel of Sarnath had been set rolling again, the wheel of the Idea as Love.

In the last resort one may conclude that the brutal yahooism of a spontaneous blood-lusting mob is less of a menace, and of an offence crying to heaven, than a cold and calculated system of atrocity, murdering its millions, on behalf of some worldly Utopia which turns into the old, old harlotry of power, and of some groups exploiting others for their own assurance of power and to save their own necks. We may decide to make a choice on behalf of whichever side will choose world government here and now, instead of international anarchy, and to keep peace by the old democratic way of majority will. We may decide at need to die for this.

But we shall have no illusions that, of itself, this organization is able to remove power-lust. We shall have no illusions that the cause of justice, as slowly a world tribunal is built, will not continue to be betrayed by secular men. And the more we are disquieted by this prospect, the more importance we shall attach to the simple, uncontaminated programme of the Mahatma, the doctrine of self-re-education, the gospel of disciplined non-violence and charity, the turning of the Wheel of Good Life whereby a *Karma* is established of a spreading benevolence through humanity.

"The world of to-morrow will be, must be," writes Gandhi, "a society based on non-violence. It may seem a distant goal, an impracticable Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable since it can be worked for here and now. An individual can

adopt the way of life of the future—the non-violent way—without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely our greatest obstacle to progress—an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away . . . In that world there will be a faith in God greater and deeper than ever in the past. The very existence of the world in a broad sense depends on religion.” That religion, however, will be the religion of non-violence which stilled communal strife in Bengal; and not the religions of the sword, the *jihad* religions of Islam and of the Sikhs, and of the Hindu Sangh, the R.S.S., which were held by their adherents to condone the murder of thousands in the Punjab.

And of this man Sir S. Radhakrishnan writes: “Only now and again does there arise above the common level some rare spirit, who, having looked upon God face to face, reflects more clearly the divine purpose, and puts into practice more courageously the divine guidance. The light of such a man shines like a strong beacon in a dark and disordered world. India is better to-day, because there has come into its life a personality that is a flame from God.”

Sir S. Radhakrishnan tells elsewhere that Gandhi once said: “I believe in non-violence. If I believe in this, there is no enemy. This takes me into realms infinitely higher than this world. You may not harbour an uncharitable thought, even in connection with one who may consider himself to be your enemy. The one who follows this doctrine has no place for an enemy. I have no enemy. The only virtue I want to claim is truth and non-violence. I lay no claim to super-human powers. I want none. I wear the same corrupt flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears and I am therefore as liable to err as any.”

As a last memory of India, Faust carried away with him the prayer meeting of the Mahatma which he had attended in the open air on the Maidan at Delhi. A crowd of several thousands, of all kinds and conditions, thronged the place. On one side arose the Moghul battlements of the famous Red Fort; on the other, the walls of Old Delhi and the Kashmir Gate. The



minarets of the Great Mosque soared, rose red, on the horizon. This time the hymn, "Abide with me", which Mohandas Gandhi used to sing with Andrews was not sung; but one of the white clad group on the platform read verses, *suras*, from the Koran. In the centre sat the figure of the Mahatma. And then in slow musical chant, as hands were clapped rhythmically, and as the sun sank pale yellow behind the dun-coloured dust clouds of the imperial city, the words were heard of the immemorial Sanskrit:

"He who beareth no ill-will to any being, friendly and  
compassionate,  
Without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and  
pain, and forgiving,  
Ever content, harmonious with the self-controlled, resolute,  
with mind and reason,  
Dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me."  
(*Gita*, xii. 13, 14).

"Advesta sarvabhutanam maitrah karuna eva ca  
Nirmamo nirahamkaraḥ samaduhkhasukhaḥ kṣami  
Samtustah satatam yogi yatatma drdhaniscayah  
Mayy arpitamanobuddhir yo madbhaktah sa me priyah."

It was nearly midnight in Calcutta, and Dum-Dum airport under the Bengal stars was dark. Only one huge aircraft on the tarmac was lit up. By the guide lights one could just discern a large symbol on its side, like the Greek letter *phi*—the sign for "Chungkuo", the sign for the Middle Kingdom between the Eastern and the Western barbarians, the sign for the Celestial Kingdom. I had an invitation to meet the Generalissimo in Nanking.

As he walked across to the aeroplane, Faust was able to reflect that some, and perhaps the chief, of the questions which he had come to India to ask he had been able to answer, or at least he had been able to descry in rough the shape of the answers. Another few minutes and the aeroplane rose, to cross Assam and the Himalayas, bound East to reach by dawn Kun-ming and China.

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